

**NURTURING SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE THROUGH
LENTEN OBSERVANCE:
A Pluralistic and Postmodern Spirituality Program for Korean Immigrants**

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Abstract

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by Younghee Chung

We are getting into the new century that is the first century in the third millenium in the Christians' eye. The new century will be totally different from the past. Up until now, we have lived in the industrial society for over three hundred years. However, the industrial civilization is being replaced by the new age, the so called "Space Age," "Information Age," "Electronic Era," etc. This social change seriously impacts all of human life including the psychological, socio-political, economic, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. In the light of the Christians' worldview, the new world needs a new theological and spiritual paradigm.

Nevertheless, the churches never follow the speed of social changes. The Korean immigrant churches are more serious. Up until now, the Korean immigrant churches have stood firmly on fundamental theology. Moreover, the writer observes that most of the Korean churches do not properly respond to a pluralistic and multi-cultural social environment. Most of the congregations of the Korean immigrant churches are Korean first generation who were born in Korea. The first generations are trying to assimilate to this multi-cultural and pluralistic society. However, most of them are suffering from cultural differences and language barriers. In this situation, the Korean churches have a responsibility to care for the people who are suffering from social and cultural differences.

In this situation, a spiritual nurturing program is suggested for the Korean immigrants through Lenten observation. This project is intended to develop a Lenten curriculum for the spiritual nurture for Korean Immigrants. The writer thinks that Lent is the best season for nurturing Christian spirituality. Lent includes, symbolically, all of the spiritual journeys of Jesus' mission. Therefore, this project creates a spiritual nurturing program for Korean immigrants so they can widely open their hearts through Lent to the pluralism and multi-culturalism, and to the new coming civilization.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Evaluation of the Current Korean Immigrant Christian Spirituality.....	11
A Brief History of Korean Christianity.....	12
Dimensions of Korean Christian Spirituality in Need to Growth.....	26
3. What is Christian Spirituality?.....	33
Theological Dimension.....	36
Ecclesiastical Dimension.....	46
Socio-Political Dimension.....	50
Biblical Dimension.....	58
Ecological Dimension.....	66
Our Experiential Dimension.....	72
4. Lenten Spirituality.....	79
The Origin of Lent.....	80
A New Understanding of Traditional Spiritual Discipline in Lent in Light of the Modern View.....	84
5. Spiritual Discipline in Lent.....	101
The Goals for the Overall Series.....	101
The Participants.....	102
The Overall Guidance of the Six Weeks.....	102
Format for Individual Sessions.....	104
Weekly Spiritual Disciplines.....	106

One Day Retreat: Prayer and Testimony.....	133
Evaluation.....	133
6. Conclusion.....	136
Bibliography.....	138

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to develop a Lenten curriculum for spiritual nurture for Korean immigrants. The world is moving into the twenty-first century. In terms of human civilization, this new century may be a civilization that human beings never imagined before. Alvin Toffler called this new civilization "the third wave."¹ According to him, this new wave is totally different from the present industrial civilization that has been developed based on the fossil fuel. Nowadays, the industrial civilization is confronted with a crisis. The existing industrial social systems have been developed based on the natural resources mainly dependent on fossil fuel. However, the existing natural resources are drained. Even though our natural resources are enough to use for a long time, we cannot increase the industrial systems based on the fossil fuel because our mother earth is totally polluted by industrial wastes. One of the main problems is the global warming. The global warming seriously impacts the whole natural environment of the earth. If the global warming continuously increases, all creatures will be destroyed in a short time. We need to carefully listen to the warning of the environmental scientists.

In addition to that, industrial social systems and structures are being replaced by the new civilization, the so called, "Space Age," "Information Age," "Electronic Era."

¹ Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave (New York: William Morrow, 1980), 26. "Humanity faces a quantum leap forward. It faces the deepest social upheaval and creative restructuring of all time. Without clearly recognizing it, we are engaged in building a remarkable new civilization from the ground up. This is the meaning of the Third Wave."

“Technotronic Age,” “Post-Industrial Society,” or “Super-Industrial Society.”² This social change seriously impacts all of the human lives including physical, psychological and spiritual life. Human beings cannot sustain the old social system anymore. Those who are walking in the old system cannot help but experience anomie³ regarding an anachronistical frustration. For example, those who do not know computer skills cannot fulfill his/her hopes for successful lives. The younger generations are replacing the leadership in most of the social organizations very fast. Even in the church, especially in Korean immigrant churches, there are serious leadership conflicts between the young generation and the old. The changing of the social system is deeply influencing the human life style. The third wave totally and radically is changing all of human life such as our work, our family life, our sexual attitudes, personal morality, and human religious values.

In this situation, we Christians cannot but help change our old religious paradigm.⁴ The new age needs a new religious paradigm. If we Christians do not properly

² Ibid., 25.

³ Elwin H. Powell, The Design of Discord (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), ix. “Every entry in the catalogue of human abrasion can be linked to anomie. Out of the soil of nihilism has grown both the personal anxiety and the public turmoil. Denoting a condition of normlessness, anomie carries the connotation of alienation, isolation, and desocialization. Anomie is the discord in the rhythm of social life.”

⁴ Hans Kung, “Paradigm Change in Theology: A Proposal for Discussion.” Paradigm Change in Theology, eds. Hans Kung and David Tracy, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 7. The term paradigm was expounded by Tomas S. Kuhn, an American physicist and historian of science in his book, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. The term paradigm is understood simply as a classic example or pattern for further experiments.

respond to those kinds of social changes, Christianity will lose the meaning of existence in the postmodern world.⁵ Nowadays, we Christians already experience very serious spiritual crises. Many people already left the church. There are just a few young people in the church. Most of the existing church members are older people. Even though young generations knock at the door of the church, it is a fact that the church cannot properly fill their spiritual hunger. Now is the time that we should ask ourselves, are the traditional Christian values still valuable to those who live in the postmodern world? I think that it is the time to create a new religious paradigm to be able to fit into the new civilization.

Nevertheless, when we look into our churches, we cannot find any proper response to the challenge of the new wave of the social change. It is more serious in the Korean immigrant churches. People are quickly assimilated into modern secular culture and leaving the church. The church is becoming empty. The young generation especially is leaving the church and not coming back. Although many people knock at the church door seeking spiritual fulfillment, the church fails to provide proper treatment for their spiritual hunger except to insist that they be oriented by the old religious paradigm. Moreover, the religious leaders themselves are suffering from spiritual hunger too because their religious paradigms cannot be fitted into the wave of the new civilization.

⁵ David Ray Griffin, God and Religion in the Postmodern World (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), ix-xi. "According to the academic worlds, the term *postmodern* is used in a confusing variety of ways." According to Griffin, "Postmodernism is the product to go beyond the modern world that involves individualism, anthropocentrism, patriarchy, mechanization, economism, consumerism, nationalism, and militarism. On the other hand, postmodern thought provides support for the ecology, peace, feminist, and other emancipatory movements of our time, while stressing that the inclusive emancipation must be from modernity itself."

In the light of the social change, the Korean immigrant churches never follow at the speed of the social changes. Although the world is changing very fast, the Korean churches stand firmly on the old theological paradigm. Nevertheless, the existing leading groups of the church do not want to release their leadership to the new generations.

For example, in the theological dimension, a very strong fundamental theology totally controls the Korean churches. The Korean immigrant Christians are mainly composed of the Korean first generation. The Korean first generation's religious background is very diverse such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shamanism, etc. Shamanism and Buddhism are deeply rooted in the Korean heart. Those religious traditions planted a faith of material blessing in the world in the Korean hearts. On the other hand, Confucianism produced conservatism, patriarchy, and hierarchical culture. Under these influences, most of the Koreans have a tendency to be very conservative in the old traditions. Most of the Koreans believe in God the Father. God is an omnipresent and omnipotent Being. Man is the representative of God. Up until now, most of the social power and authority have been dominated by the male. Most of the Korean pastors allow the gender discrimination and hierarchical structures as God's law. Also the old generations have a very strong power in the Korean society. For example, even in the pastors' meeting, young pastors cannot freely express their opinion before the old pastors. And they focus on individual salvation. The pursuit of individual salvation and material blessing became one of the characters of Korean faith. There are just a few churches that are involved in the social justice and peace among the Korean churches. Without overcoming the pursuit of the individualistic salvation and material blessing, Korean churches and congregations cannot grow as mature Christians.

In addition to that, in the sociological dimension, Korean immigrant churches have serious problems. Spirituality cannot be separated from social praxis and context. Korean society has been changed rapidly from an agricultural society to an industrial society, from an industrial society to an information society, from an information age to space age within just about 30 years since 1960. In the case of the Western people, they have experienced the industrial society for 300 years. On the other hand, Koreans have experienced totally different social systems from an agricultural society to space age within just 30 years. An infinite number of changes have occurred simultaneous in the Korean society. According to the change of the social systems, most of the moral and religious values have been destroyed or changed very fast.

Moreover the immigrant social context is totally different from Korean society. Los Angeles especially is the most pluralistic society in the world. There are many people who have various racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in Los Angeles. Nevertheless, even though Korean first generations live in the most pluralistic city, they are still closely related to Korean society. Everyday they are listening to the Korean radio and watch the Korean channel on TV. And they read Korean newspapers. Most of the Korean first generations have a greater concern and understanding of Korean political and economic issues than for the United States. Although they live in the United States, their minds are inclined to Korea. Most of the Korean first generation immigrants have language and cultural barriers. As a result, they are excluded from the main line society of the United States. Korean immigrant people are suffering from not being assimilated into the pluralistic society. In this situation, Korean immigrants are wandering losing moral and social consensus. As a result, most of the Korean immigrants are experiencing

psychological emptiness. The Korean immigrant churches have a responsibility to take care of those who are experiencing spiritual emptiness in this pluralistic society.

In the cultural dimension, culture is closely related to human spiritual formation like social structure. All human beings have their own unique cultural experiences. According to the cultural uniqueness, all human beings form their spirituality. If one culture clashes with another, spiritual crises come out of the culture clash.⁶ When it happens, people experience anomie. When one predominant culture dominates other cultures, the experience of anomie is more serious for the people who are inferior to others. As I mentioned above, Koreans have a unique culture that has existed over 4,500 years. Koreans have a strong tendency to hold onto their own culture and first generations do not easily open their hearts to pluralism. Cultural assimilation is very difficult for the Korean first generation. For them, cultural shocks are very serious. Korean immigrants are suffering from forming new self-identities as Korean Americans. Therefore, many Korean immigrants knock at the door of the church to get a spiritual console from the church. However, the Korean immigrant churches cannot properly treat them in terms of the postmodern worldview. Although the Korean churches can give temporal spiritual console, the people just become more socially blind. The church must be a torch for the reformation of the social evil structures. Jesus said "You are the salt of the earth and the

⁶ Philip Sheldrake, Spirituality and History (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1992), 68-71.

light of the world" (Matt. 5:13-14).⁷ Nevertheless, Korean immigrant churches do not fulfill their original mission to be the salt and the light of the world.

In this situation, in order to fulfill the mission of the church in this pluralistic society, the Korean immigrant churches must reform their old theological paradigm and they have to be nurtured spiritually. This coming new age needs more spiritually inclusive people who can willingly take care of other people and all of the creatures. We Christians need to form a new Christian spirituality that can embrace all creatures and other people in the love of God. In order to do that, through my ministerial experience, I believe that Korean immigrant churches should be spiritually nurtured in terms of the following six dimensions especially. Those are theological, ecclesiastical, socio-political, biblical, ecological, and our experiential dimensions. There are lots of spiritual disciplines in the field of spirituality. However, in my personal ministerial experience, I think that those six dimensions are basically important for spiritual nurturing for the Korean immigrants. In terms of those six dimensions, I will create a six-week spiritual nurturing program through the Lenten observation.

In this sense, this project will be focused on organic theology.⁸ Organic theology is a very useful theological tool for developing spiritual exercise in the pluralistic and

⁷ All scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

⁸ Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore, Teaching from the Heart (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 2. According to Moore, "People are connected with themselves, with one another, with social systems, with the earth, and transcendence reality. The other dream is for the art of theology to be parted in such an organic way that theological reflection touches and connects all dimensions of life. The very word organic connotes the natural world in which everything is related to everything else. Human beings are part of that world; we exist in a web of relationships."

postmodern society. According to organic theology, people are connected with themselves and with one another. Moreover, human beings are closely related with the social system and the natural world. Any human being cannot live alone without cooperation with one another. In this ecological crisis age, organic theology is a very useful tool developing a spiritual exercise curriculum through Lent.

There are various ways for spiritual nurture and discipline programs in the church. This project will be confined to developing the spiritual exercise curriculum through the church year. The church year can be divided into Advent season, Christmas season, Epiphany, Lenten season, Easter season, and ordinary time. In terms of the spiritual dimension, each church year has one's own uniqueness. The purpose of this project is to develop a spiritual exercise curriculum focused on Lenten season because the Lenten season is the most convenient season for spiritual discipline. When Lent comes, people are willingly involved in the spiritual way of life.

In order to do that, I explore the current Korean immigrant's spirituality in Chapter 2. Up until now, most of the members of the Korean immigrant churches are composed of the Korean first generations. Therefore, in order to explore the current Korean immigrant's spirituality, their spiritual background must be studied first. In case of the Korean first generation, even though they live in the United States, their spiritual and cultural background is strongly related to Korean historical background that is their mother country. So I will study the Korean religious background historically. Through that process, I will explore the characters of the Korean immigrant's spirituality in order to make a nurturing curriculum through the Lenten observation.

In the third chapter, I will define what Christian spirituality is in terms of theological, ecclesiastical, socio-political, biblical, ecological, and our experiential dimensions. In order to create a spiritual nurturing program, first of all, the term of spirituality should be defined. In the postmodern world, we need to be clear what Christian spirituality is. Without defining the Christian spirituality, we cannot create a nurturing program. As I already mentioned, there can be lots of ways to develop for spiritual nurturing programs. However, I will confine myself only to those six dimensions because I think that those six areas are the most important and urgent for the Korean immigrant's churches.

In the fourth chapter, I will study the historical background of Lent and the traditional ways of spiritual discipline in Lent. As Christians, we can divide the year by the liturgical year such as, Advent season, Christmas season, Epiphany, Lenten season, Easter season and ordinary time. In the liturgical year, Lent is one of the best seasons for the spiritual discipline and intensive nurture in the church because the "First Sunday describes Jesus' temptation by Satan; and the Sixth Sunday (Passion/Palm Sunday), Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his subsequent passion and death."⁹ In this sense, we can spiritually think that Lent includes all of the spiritual journeys of Jesus Christ. I believe that our Christian spiritual fountain is Jesus Christ. Through the Lenten season, we Christians can deeply meditate on what Jesus Christ our Lord wants for us and how to follow his life journey in the postmodern world as his disciples. Therefore, I want

⁹ United Methodist Church (U.S.), The United Methodist Book of Worship (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 320.

to study the background of Lent and the theology of the Lenten spirituality in this chapter.

In the fifth chapter, I will offer a six-week spiritual discipline curriculum through Lent. Usually, the traditional spiritual discipline and exercise are focused on individual meditation, fasting and almsgiving. It has been focused on individual salvation. However, in the postmodern and pluralistic society, we need to reform our Christian spirituality in terms of the pluralistic worldview. As Christians, we should be concerned about holistic salvation that embraces all of the creatures as well as all human beings. Therefore, in the sense of the organic theology, I will make a spiritual discipline and nurturing curriculum through the Lenten observance. The curriculum will be designed on a weekly basis during Lent.

In the concluding part, I will show why I have to create this project. We live in a very different world from the past. So we need to reform our Christian spirituality so as to be applied to our modern society. And we need to develop it. What spirituality we have is the matter of who we are. While mother nature and our brothers and sisters are being destroyed continuously, we cannot pursue only our own salvation. We should know our society and the world. We need to reform our Christian spirituality in terms of a wider perspective. The traditional Christian spirituality has been focused on individual and anthropocentric worldview. Now it is the time to reform our Christian spirituality in terms of our pluralistic and ecological crises age.

CHAPTER 2

Evaluation of the Current Korean Immigrant Christian Spirituality

In this chapter, I will describe the contexts of Korean Christian spirituality and lift up six dimensions in need of transformation in the postmodern world: theological, ecclesiastical, socio-political, ecological, biblical and our experiential dimensions. We can explore Christian spirituality in the light of the various perspectives. In this chapter, I will confine myself only to the above six dimensions because I think that those dimensions are very important and urgent issues for the Korean immigrant Christians. In terms of the multicultural, pluralistic, and postmodern worldview, Korean immigrants need to reform their current spirituality that is based on the fundamental, individualistic, ethnocentric, and anthropocentric faith.

For the coming new century, we need to have a more inclusive faith and salvation than in the past. Now we need to sincerely realize that we cannot be saved alone without others' salvation that includes all of the creatures as well as human beings. Nevertheless, up until now, most of the Korean churches have stressed individual salvation and ethnocentric, anthropocentric faith. From the beginning of the Korean Christianity to the present, Koreans have suffered from the power struggles between the super nations such as, China, Russia, Japan, and the United States etc. In this situation, Korean Christian leaders cannot help but put stress on an ethnocentric faith first. However, now we Korean immigrant Christians need to reform our Christian spirituality from an exclusive spirituality to an inclusive spirituality that embraces other people's salvation as well as the salvation of the natural world. The coming new century needs a new spirituality that can embrace human salvation as well as the salvation of the natural world. In this sense, I will evaluate the current Korean

immigrant spirituality in this chapter, and I will suggest a new spiritual paradigm for the Korean Christians at the end of the chapter.

In order to do that, first of all, I will explore the history of the Korean Church very briefly. The reason is that it is impossible to study Korean Christian spirituality without a historical analysis of Korean Christian history and Korean traditional religions because all Koreans have been deeply influenced by the Korean traditional religions. After this analysis, I will evaluate Korean Immigrant Christian spirituality.

A Brief History of Korean Christianity

Koreans have their own long history covering about 4,500 years. The name of the first state was Go-Chosen that was established by King Sandlewood (Tangun) in 2333 B.C. Since then, the name of our nation has been changed several times. Through this long history, Korean people have been affected by many religions such as Shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Chendoism, and Christianity. Among these, I want to briefly introduce Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism because all Koreans were deeply influenced by those religious traditions.

First, the oldest and most popular Korean religion is Shamanism. Shamanism has been rooted in Korean experience for a long time. It is based on Animism, a kind of ancient religion. It is the religion of the common people or the lower ignorant classes rather than of the educated. The word Shaman is a Persian word, meaning an idolater. The Shamanists are those who profess that by the use of fetishes, charms, and other supposed means of influence over spirits and demons, they can cure diseases and avert impending disaster.¹ Before the

¹ Harry A. Rhodes, ed. History of the Korea Mission (Seoul: Y.M.C.A. Press, 1932), 48.

modern age. Koreans usually attributed all disasters, especially sickness, to the spirits. Koreans believed that good or evil spirits control human fortunes and misfortunes. In the countryside, all village people assembled together to divine the will of the spirit. In the beginning and ending of every year, they had a big celebration every. When I was a child, I participated in the celebration several times. According to the Shamanistic worldview, the spirits are divided into the good spirit and the evil spirit. And, human beings are an integral part of the rhythm of nature. Shamanism emphasizes the continuum of everything in nature. Even death is considered as much a part of existence as birth. The dead who died having a grudge can mobilize the forces of nature for revenge. Shamanism deeply influenced the forming of the spirituality of the Korean grass roots people. However, Shamanism lacks ideals which can be described as "absolute truth," such as love in Christianity. Nevertheless, up until now, Shamanism still has an important effect upon the Korean religious mind which interacts with Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Christianity. In fact, we can say that all Koreans have a Shamanistic spirituality deep inside, even the Christians.

Secondly, nowadays, almost 30 percent of the Korean population is Buddhist. Buddhism has a long history in Korea. Since the time of the three Kingdoms (57 C.E. – 935 C.E.) in the ancient age of Korea: Koguryo, Paekche, and Silla, Buddhism has been a main religion in Korea. From that time to 1392 C.E. when the Yi Dynasty was established in Korea, Buddhism was the national religion. All Koreans were deeply influenced by Buddhism through this long history. It is no exaggeration to say that Buddhism formed the basic Korean religious mind. In fact, the main cultural inheritances of Korea originated in

Buddhism. There are still many Buddhist temples and the Buddhist heritage is here and there in Korea.

When I was a child, my home town was located near the Kyeroung Mountain. Centering around the mountain, there are three very famous Buddhist temples. My friends and I would play in the yard of the Buddhist temple every day. The anniversary of Buddha's birth was the biggest festival in my home town. Even today, Buddha's birthday is the national holiday in Korea. Buddha's four great virtues and ten commandments are as follows;

1) That existence is misery followed by old age, sickness, and death; 2) The cause for this lies in the desire and lusts of human beings; 3) Pain and misery could be made to cease by desire; 4) The way that leads to the desired end is by RIGHT faith, intention, talk, actions, livelihood, effort, meditation, and thoughts. And, the ten commandments of Buddhism are DO NOT kill any living thing; steal; commit impurity; lie; drink wine; eat raw food, take part in singing, dancing, theatrical performances; use flowers or perfumes for personal adornment; sit on a high bench or couch; possess silver, gold or jewels.²

I never was a Buddhist. However, I naturally learned about Buddha's teaching in my daily life from an early age. Also, I learned about the history of Buddhism and Buddhist culture from the school as our traditional heritage. Therefore, we can say all Koreans have been affected by Buddhist spirituality.

Thirdly, Confucianism was a very important part in establishing Korean social and ethical attitudes too. In fact, Confucianism is not a kind of religion. However, it has an

² Ibid., 51.

important effect upon Koreans as a substitute for religion. Confucianism had been propagated from China to Korea before 651 C.E. The influence of Confucianism in Korea no doubt greatly increased when the scholar, Choi Chi Won, after years of study in China, returned in 885 C.E. with Chinese classics.

But Confucianism did not supplant Buddhism in Korea until the beginning of the Yi Dynasty in 1392 C.E.³ Since the Yi Dynasty was established Confucianism held complete sway over Korean society for five hundred years until 1910 when Korea was annexed to Japan. Sunggye Lee, who was the first king of the Yi Dynasty, adopted Confucianism as the main principles for the governance of Korea. Confucianism became the state religion of the Yi Dynasty.

Confucianism offered the basic principles of all government areas of the Yi Dynasty, such as political, economical, educational, and social. The canon of Confucianism is five classics and four books. The fundamental teaching of Confucius was the love of the human being. The five governing principles of Confucianism are benevolence, uprightness, politeness, wisdom, and fidelity. It is concerned with the five relationships of life which are, king and subject, parent and child, husband and wife, elder and younger brother, friend and friend.⁴

In Confucianism, ancestor worship, the extending filial piety to the dead, is a very important corner stone. This was the greatest obstacle for Confucians in becoming Christians because they were required to give up the worship of their ancestors. This was a

³ Ibid., 54.

⁴ Ibid., 54.

main cause for the persecution of Christianity by the Korean government in the early age of the Christian mission. Western missionaries did not understand Korean ancestor worship. In the eyes of western missionaries, ancestor worship was the worship of idols. Therefore, all of the missionaries insisted that the people give up ancestor worship to become Christians.

As a result, the Korean government strongly persecuted Christianity because Korean governors thought that Christianity might destroy the Korean tradition and society. If Western missionaries recognized that the ancestor worship was not worshipping idols but the heritage of Korean culture, they may have not forbidden ancestor worship, and they may not have been persecuted by the Korean government.

At any rate, up until now, Confucianism has had, either positively or negatively, a great effect on Korean society. Confucianism has especially had a deep effect upon Korean society to establish a moral society. On the other hand, Confucianism brought a very hierarchical and patriarchal system into Korean society. All people had to obey the authority of the nation in the Yi dynasty. All women had to obey their husbands. And, all children were taught to obey their parents unconditionally. Under the influence of Confucianism, Korean people were accustomed to submit to the stronger one, the elder one, and to authority unconditionally. Unconditional obedience to the authority of the government was taught as the highest virtue in Confucianism. In the Confucian society, the king was the representative of heaven. This concept of subservience became a most destructive influence on the Korean society in developing democracy.

Even now, the Confucianism's ideals are still promoted by the Korean government. All Korean students have to study Korean traditional ethics in Junior and Senior high school. Korean ethics are a very important required course in every grade. The basic

principles of this ethical teaching are based on Confucian ideals. Until I graduated from the University, I had to choose Korean ethics with Korean history as a required course. In fact, although I am a Christian, my personal morality was deeply influenced by Confucianism.

In this situation, I became a Christian. Unfortunately, in order to become a Christian, I had to give up all my own traditional heritages because Western missionaries considered Korean heritage as idol worship. Comparing our long history, the propagation of Christianity is very recent. Protestantism began spreading in 1884. Catholicism began 100 years earlier than Protestantism. When Christianity was propagated in Korea, Koreans suffered from the effects of surrounding super nations. Many powerful countries competed against each other to colonize Korea. As a result, Korea was annexed by Japan in 1910. Until Korea took its independence from the Japanese in 1945, Koreans suffered from terrible oppression.

During World War II, many young men were coercively drafted by Japan to serve in the military service. And many young women had to offer themselves for service in volunteer corps. Many Korean young people were killed as scapegoats of World War II for Japan. Also, Japan forbade the use of the Korean language. The Japanese government forcibly demanded Koreans to use the Japanese language. Moreover, all Koreans had to change their names into Japanese names. Japan formed several policies to obliterate the Korean spirituality. They completely distorted Korean history, and tried to indoctrinate the Korean people as Japanese colonial citizens.

In the dark era, many patriots assembled, centering around the church. At that time, the church was a very important channel for receiving foreign information. Many patriots were inculcated in the doctrine of independence in reaction against the oppression of Japan

through the guidance of the Bible. At last, Korea became independent from Japan in 1945. Unfortunately, the independence of Korea came through the victory of the allied forces under the control of the United States. As a result, Korea did not get a complete independence. Korea became subordinated by surrounding super nations politically and culturally.

To make matters worse, the Korean War broke out in 1950. Korean people suffered again from 1950 to 1953. The Korean War was ended with the assistance of the UN. After the Korean War the UN, whose delegates were from the United States and the Soviet Union, wanted to put Korea under a trusteeship and divided Korea into South and North. Koreans totally rejected the trusteeship of the UN.

However, Korea was forcibly divided into South Korea and North Korea without any regard for the Korean people. The influence of Japanese colonialism and the Korean War had tremendous effects upon the political, economic and cultural structures of Korean society as well as Korean spirituality. Even though Korea was released from the Japanese colonialism and the Korean war, because the freedom was not brought about an independent by our Korean power, Korea could not gain a complete political, economical, social, psychological and spiritual independence. Those two events deeply influenced Korean Christian spirituality. Korean pastors interpreted the independence of Korea from Japan as the "Korean Exodus."

However, there was a big difference between the independence of Korea and the exodus of the Israelites. In my point of view, the Exodus of the Israelites was not just a political, economical, and social independence issue. The most important thing was that the exodus of the Israelites was to restore their identity as children of God. That was a spiritual

reformation from slaves to free human beings. They took the spiritual freedom instead of an economically comfortable life. I think that true independence is to find one's own self-identity in the presence of God. The Israelites theologized their historical experiences about the Egyptian's oppression and the exodus from Egypt as God's salvific event.

On the other hand, Korean Christians unfortunately failed to theologize their history. I think this is the biggest tragedy in Korean history. We should theologize our history like the Israelites. I believe that we Korean Christians can interpret our suffering history as God's salvific history. Unfortunately, South Korean pastors taught their congregations that the UN's protection of them against the invasion of North Korea was God's salvation for Korea. It was a wrong interpretation of the Korean history. In my personal opinion, I want to find the basic reason for the Korean war from the UN's trusteeship. If Korea had not been put under the trusteeship of the UN, Korea might never have been divided into South and North, and the Korean War might never have erupted.

Nevertheless, all Korean pastors taught their congregations to hate North Korea unconditionally. I have never heard a sermon that says we have to love North Korea. Also, I was continuously taught to hate the North Koreans during my elementary school days. That kind of teaching deeply affected Korean Christian spirituality. After the Korean War, many secular scholars and theologians began to study in the USA. They accepted the western worldview and theology through American eyes without any criticism. After their study, they became very important leaders in Korean society. They applied their worldview to Korean political and economic policy and theological field.

As a result, we Koreans were completely subordinated by the American economic and political system, as well as cultural dimension and spiritual dimensions. When I was a

child, I learned that the United States was a very gracious nation for South Koreans. I believed that the United States was an unconditionally good nation. On the other hand, Russia and North Korea were our enemies. I think that my belief was a common belief for most of the Koreans. Therefore, we Koreans began to imitate American politics, economics, and social ethics as well as theology. The United States was the model that Koreans chose to follow. Koreans became deeply affected by American philosophy in every field of life. In the theological field, the effect was more serious than in other fields. Most of the Korean theologians adopted foreign theology without screening of Korean traditional culture. Korean theologians did not have a chance to establish their own theology. In this sense, most of the pastors unconditionally treated the Korean traditional heritage as idol worship in terms of the Western Christian worldview. In recent times, though Minjung theology has been developing in Korea. Its' influence is still very weak. Minjung theologians have tried to reevaluate Korean traditional heritage to form our own theology. However, their works have been disregarded by the Korean main line churches which were oriented by Western theology.

When Christianity was propagated in Korean society by Western missionaries, the missionaries easily disregarded the Korean living story that had been formed through the long history of about 4,500 years. We can see examples of their stereotypes of Korean people from their reports. According to the report of Appenzeller who was the first Methodist missionary:

They (Koreans) are poor as church mice, lazy as dogs, dirty as pigs, ravenous as wolves, and proud as hypocrites. They work little and rest much. But notwithstanding all these bad habits and tendencies, there is much to be admired in them. They are reaching out for something they do not have.

They feel or seem to feel the necessity for help in their endeavors to rise from their long sleep [1886].⁵

In this report, we can see one side of the missionary ways of the early Korean mission. They showed no understanding of the Korean society. Appenzeller evaluated Koreans as an inferior people without any understanding about them. Nevertheless, all Korean pastors directly adopted missionaries' theology and their cultural perspective. In the early age of Christian mission in Korea, most of Korean Christians were subordinated by western theology.

Nevertheless, although the Korean church has adopted Western Christianity without any criticisms, Korean Christians were active in the anti-colonial and independence movement during the colonial period. Throughout the colonial period, the Korean church was a center of anti-Japanese sentiments and many of the Christian patriots in the struggle for freedom, both abroad and in Korea's internal underground, were Christians. In that situation, all Korean patriotic Christians believed that being Christian was the best way to escape from Japanese colonialism. They never thought that being Christian could be another subordination under Western philosophy and culture. As Christians, many patriots were strongly involved in the Korean independent movement.

However, after the Korean War and since the 1960s, the Korean churches withdrew from the involvement in social and political matters. Instead of that, revivalism became the main focus of attention.

⁵ Quoted in Everett Nichols Hunt, Jr., Protestant Pioneers in Korea (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1980), 59.

From its early beginnings the Korean church had been keen on revivals. The revival experience is intensely emotional. People are put under a seeming conviction of sin and they experience the sweet refreshment of the Holy Spirit. The experience is deeply personal, but almost entirely private. Since the 1960's much of Korean Christianity withdrew into the shell of revivalism.⁶

Membership in the Korean Christian churches increased rapidly through the revival movement. However, the Korean churches were manipulated by the dictatorial government since 1960s.

In the 1950's Seungman Rhee who was the first president of South Korea and a Methodist Christian, established a chaplaincy program in the army. Korean ministers were allowed to preach to the troops, the police, or homeguard. The content of the preaching was invariably the private message of personal salvation. They were also expected to attend meetings or briefings that explained to them government policies and programs. The clergymen then passed on this information to their congregations.⁷

After that time, the church became a political means under the *Yushin* system that was established by president Park Jung-Hee. President Park manipulated the chaplaincy program and church as a channel for his dictatorship. Under the *Yushin* system, most of the Korean preaching had actually played the role of an ideology that has rationalized the ruling power of the dictatorial government. There were a few churches that were strongly against the *Yushin* system. The chaplaincy program was used to transmit the ideology of military dictatorship.

However, most of the Korean churches welcomed the program because their perspective was oriented by only fundamental evangelism. Ideology has a function which

⁶ George E. Ogle, Liberty to the Captivities (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), 108.

⁷ Ibid., 108

rationalizes an existing economic and political, and social structure. Georges Casalis is quoting Paul Ricoeur's theory about ideology. According to Paul Ricoeur, ideology has four functions. The first function is "the function of illusion."⁸ There is a lot of talk about freedom in the free world, but if we keep silent about capitalist exploitation in the structures of injustice, then we are supporting the exploitation and the injustice.

The second function is "the function of legitimization."⁹ Ideology has a function which rationalizes the existing social structure as a good order. Usually, a social ideology is justified by the wealth of the oppressor. Therefore, justice is usually distorted by the oppressor. Justice becomes a way to maintain the existing social order. The third function is "the function of integration."¹⁰ When an ideology is spread by national institutions, such as, the school, university, and Church, then ideology has a function that unifies the whole social structure as a monotype. The result is that even the victims of society declare the social structure to be a good order.

Finally, "the ideology functions as the means of government."¹¹ Ideology has a function that captures the members of the society to serve the ideology of the oppressors. Therefore, using the ideology, the wealthy or the oppressors of society are not disturbed in the process of their work. The wealthy and the oppressors can control the society at their

⁸ Georges Casalis, "Fernando Belo: Lecture Materialiste de l'Evangile de Marc," Theologia Practica 13 (1978): 62.

⁹ Ibid., 62

¹⁰ Ibid., 62

¹¹ Ibid., 62.

will through their ideology. The military government identified with social justice movement and communism. Under the military dictatorship, most of the Korean churches did not have any concern for social justice. Their main concern was only evangelism.

Under the *Yushin* system, chaplaincy was clearly a channel for transmission of military dictatorship's ideology. Moreover, most of the Korean churches welcomed the system of chaplaincy. Most of the Korean pastors believed that the system of chaplaincy was one of the best ways to evangelize young people. Of course, a few churches and many young students protested the *Yushin* system. All of them were severely persecuted by the government. On the contrary, most of the Korean churches focused on the individual salvation instead of social justice. Up until now, most of the Korean ministers have emphasized individual salvation and individual blessing. Korean pastors talk about God's love, salvation, justice, and grace every day. However, they do not consider social justice. They usually emphasize only individual salvation and individual happy life.

The main reason is the following. Under the *Yushin* system, many Koreans were strongly oriented by anti-communism. The military government definitely manipulated Koreans by anti-communism and the possibility of a war between South and North Korea. Whenever the military government fell in to trouble, they manipulated the Korean common people by the threat of North Korea. Most of the pastors who experienced the Korean War totally supported the strategy of the anti-communism that the military government propagated. Most of the Korean pastors taught their congregations not to participate in the social justice movement. They identified social justice movement with communism. In this

situation, most of the Korean churches have shrunk from the social justice movement and have fallen into the faith of individual salvation.

Now, we Korean pastors should reestablish and redefine our Christian identity. We should develop our Christian spirituality in terms of political, social, cultural, ecological, biblical, and our unique experience. We have to have a great concern about the social, political and economical justice and ecological crisis. We can realize the true meaning of justice, love, and salvation only in the relationship with God, our neighbor and the natural world. The truth of our relationship with God is only measured by the truth of our relationships with other creatures.

God is only encountered on the path of justice. Justice implies the love for neighbor. Love is the core of the biblical message, but in order for it to be true love, justice is presupposed. Love implies in fact the absolute demand of justice that consists in the recognition of the dignity and 'rights of ones' neighbor. Justice itself reaches its inner fullness only in love. Love of neighbor and justice cannot be separated.¹²

In other words, the notions of love, justice, salvation are relative conceptions. We have to understand those concepts in the relationship with other people and the natural world. When we talk about justice, we should not exclude the position of our daily life in the political, social, and economical structures and ecological crisis. Therefore, we have to develop our Christian spirituality. In order to do that, we Christians have to participate positively in the national political, economical, and social policy in the sense of God's justice and love. In this sense, the church, which is composed of Christians, must be a political community. Every human being lives in a political, economical, social structure

¹². Leonardo Boff, Church, Charism and Power (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 24.

and natural world. There is no exception in this world. We Christians must consider everything in terms of political, social, economical, ecological perspectives.

Dimensions of Korean Christian Spirituality in Need to Growth

I have briefly explained the background of Korean Christian spirituality. Korean Christian spirituality has been formed in the most difficult ages in the Korean history which included the age of Japanese' colonialism, Korean war and military dictatorship. Under the very difficult situation of the Korean history, Koreans received Christian Gospel and they developed their theology and spirituality. Therefore Korean spirituality is deeply related to Korean socio-political and cultural context.

Concerning this context, I am going to lift out six dimensions of spirituality that the Korean Christianity needs to focus on and transform. In terms of the theological dimension, we can understand why most of the Koreans are very fundamentalist. Under the influence of Confucianism, the first generation Koreans usually are oriented by the patriarchal system. Therefore, Koreans have a tendency for conservative and fundamental perspectives about religion. For a Korean, God is the father and the omnipotent and omnipresent Being. Most of the Koreans were oriented by the anthropocentric supernaturalism. Koreans have a strong belief that the Scriptures were written by the verbal inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They have a strong belief system that is centered on male-dominant and anthropocentric exclusivism and a strong faith of the individual centered salvation. In my opinion, this result came from the distortion of Korean Christian spirituality by Japanese colonialism, Korean war, and military dictatorship. According to Marion Dearman's report, "90 percent of Korean churches in Los Angeles belong to fundamentalist, conservative, or evangelical sects. Out of

the sixty-five ministers who responded to the questionnaire, only one minister classified himself as a 'liberal.'"¹³

Now we Koreans have to reform our fundamental theology in terms of pluralism. In the light of the biblical view, God is the creator and we Koreans need to open our hearts to other people and all of God's creatures. We have captured God just in our own jar of ethnocentrism. In this pluralistic society, Korean immigrants should recognize God who loves all human beings and all creatures equally. In this understanding of God, Koreans must reform their Christian spirituality to be able to cooperate with other ethnic groups.

In terms of ecclesiastical dimension, the urgent issue of the Korean churches is to recover the identity of the Church. All Koreans believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church and all Christians and churches are a part of the Church. Nevertheless, all Korean churches do not cooperate with one another. Practically, they seriously are competing with each other for growth only of their individual churches. Now, Korean churches must be reformed in the light of the great commission of the church. The great commission of the church is to make all persons disciples of Jesus Christ and children of God, not to make them members of just an individual church.

In terms of the socio-political dimension, Korean churches must reform their fundamental theology in the light of our pluralistic and multi-cultural society. Since the 1960s, Korean churches drastically have been growing tremendously. We need to understand the Korean social context of the 1960s. That was the industrial revolution age of

¹³ Marion Dearman, "Structure and Function of Religion in the Los Angeles Korean Community: Some Aspects," in Korean in Los Angeles, ed. Eui-Young Yu et al. (Los Angeles: Koryo Research Institute, 1982), 165.

Korea. Under the strong military dictatorship, Korea began to reform our agricultural society into an industrial society. In the process of a radical reformation of the social system from agricultural system to an industrial system in only about 20 years, a lot of social evils came out such as a strong materialism, a loss of human dignity and disdain of human life, destruction of eco-system, a serious increasing of pollution, a serious confusion of moral consensus etc. Only strong materialism became deeply rooted in the Korean society.

In that situation, all of the Korean churches taught that material blessing was God's blessing. In the process of the establishing of the industrial society in Korea, Korean people assembled in the church for material blessing. Although Korean churches drastically grew, the moral value of the Korean society were seriously degraded more than in the past. Most of the Korean immigrants experienced the Korean social change. Although they immigrated to this new world, their religious value and moral value did not change.

The best wish of the Korean immigrants is to become rich in this new world. There is no room for caring for other people in the Korean mind because they are really struggling with a language barrier, culture shock, economic problems etc. The only wish is to become rich and to educate their children better. Survival is more serious for Korean immigrants. Almost everybody feels that they are marginalized people in this society. They feel that Korean immigrant people are excluded from the main line society.

Now, the Korean immigrants should have concern for social justice and racial discrimination. Up until now, although Korean immigrants are living in the most pluralistic society in the world, they lack understanding of the pluralistic society. If they could not understand the reality of this society, even though they work very hard, they could not fulfill their goal for a happy life in this society. Fortunately, after the LA riot, the Koreans began to

understand our society. In the pluralistic and multi-cultural society, nobody could survive alone without cooperation with each other. In order to fulfill our goal, we should be concerned with other's happiness. If we do not cooperate with each other, we will destroy each other. In this pluralistic and multi-cultural society, we should develop a relational centered spirituality which is rooted in the sense of "I to thou." We should follow Jesus' foot steps to sacrifice for others. We should recognize and respect others' human dignities and rights. This is the only way to live together in this pluralistic society.

In the biblical dimension, most of the Korean Christians are very fundamentalist. Most of them believe the verbal inspiration of the Bible. They do not understand that the Bible is composed of metaphorical language. Most the Korean pastors strongly insist that the Bible is the word of God. Therefore, Korean pastors have strongly supported male-dominant patriarchal system. They interpreted the Bible literally. One of the worst cases is this. After the L.A. uprising, I heard several times the interpretation of the Genesis chapter nine by Korean elderly pastors. They interpreted the Genesis chapter nine as followings: Japheth is the ancestor of White, Shem is the ancestor of yellow, and Ham is the ancestor of Black.

On this interpretation, Korean pastors legitimize racism as God's will. It is anachronism. When we interpret the Bible, we must consider the context of the text. We need to study the social context of the text without preconception. If we try to apply the Bible just idiomatically in modern society without the consideration of the life situation in the text, we should realize the fact that we may become an evil-doer.

Scripture is the norm of a Christian's whole life and thought, but if we try to apply the Scripture only grammatically and idiomatically, Scripture may become an idol for our selfish purpose. All Scriptures must be interpreted in the light of Jesus' sacrificial love for all human beings. God loves all human beings and other creatures. Koreans should reform our anthropocentric and ethnocentric interpretation of the Bible. Love for God and others are the center for biblical centered spirituality.

In terms of ecological dimension, we should reform our consumer oriented life style. Up until now, Korean Christians have been oriented by the consumer oriented industrialism during the last 30 years. One of the most important national slogans was "lets overcome being poor," for 1960s and 1970s in Korea. All Koreans worked very hard. As a result, Korea could overcome being poor. However the price was too high. All parts of the country were rapidly cultivated by the program of industrialization without any protection strategy from pollution. All parts of Korean country were polluted by industrial wastes. Nevertheless, up until now, there is no room for concern for ecological crisis in the Korean mind.

Korean immigrants are not different from the Koreans who live in Korea. They do not have any concern about ecological crisis. They have been totally oriented by materialism and consumer oriented culture. Korean immigrants should recognize that the earth is the body of God. All Christians should take care of the earth. We live in the post-industrial society. Within a few decades, our natural resources will be completely drained. If we do not reform our consumer- oriented life style, all human beings will be destroyed together. In the postindustrial society, all Christians must work very hard to take care of the earth. We

should save energy and natural resources. We also must support creation of new energy which is not fossil fuels and will not pollute.

In human experiential dimension, Korean people can contribute to the suffering people. We Koreans have a lot of suffering experiences in our long history. If we can theologize our suffering experiences like the Israelites, we can contribute to other suffering people. Here is a good example. A Korean theologian, Andrew Sung Park, suggested a new hermeneutic for the oppressed people. According to him,

Traditional Christian understandings of sin, repentance, and forgiveness have all but unilaterally focused on the sinner. They have emphasized the magnitude of sin to such a degree that only through repenting of sin to God would the sinner be saved by God's grace. By listening and responding to assuring Word of God, the sinner's sin is forgiven and his or her guilt is removed. These concepts of sin and salvation are of limited utility in addressing the problems of human evil and suffering.¹⁴

In case of the Western traditional theological hermeneutics, the salvation of the sinner is always primary concern more than the victim. On the other hand, Korean Minjung theologian, Andrew Sung Park raises the issues of the salvation of the oppressed or victim. If we see the Bible honestly, we can easily understand that God always concern about the suffering of the oppressed rather than salvation of the oppressors. In the long history, we Koreans have been oppressed as victims under the invasion of the surrounding super nations. If Koreans can theologize our suffering life, I believe that we Koreans can contribute to the theological field wonderfully. Through our Korean

¹⁴ Andrew Sung Park, The Wounded Heart of God (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 69.

suffering experiences, we easily understand the victim's cry and suffering. I believe that our suffering experiences are wonderful resources for suffering people in the world.

CHAPTER 3

What is Christian Spirituality?

Spirituality is the essence of all of the religions in the world. We can find that spiritual teachings are main issues in all of the world's great religions, in every culture, every nation, every ethnic group, and throughout recorded human history. However, what is spirituality? Is there any shared vision and common understanding about spirituality? Unfortunately, according to religion, culture, era, the definition of spirituality has been defined in very different ways. Even in the Christian circle, there is no consensus about what Christian spirituality is. In order to study spirituality, we must first try to define what Christian spirituality is.

In this project, I want to explore Christian spirituality within the six dimensions identified in the previous chapter: theological, ecclesiastical, socio-political, ecological, biblical, and our experiential dimensions. In terms of the postmodern and pluralistic worldview, those are very important spiritual dimensions for the Korean immigrants who enter into the gateway of the twenty-first century, the first century of the third millenium. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, Korean immigrant Christians' spirituality is very fundamental, ethnocentric, and anthropocentric. Now, it is time to reform their spirituality in terms of the postmodern and pluralistic worldview. Korean immigrant Christians should realize their social and cultural context where they are living now. We cannot exist alone in the world. Human beings are not independent beings. Human beings are closely related with other people, social systems, the natural world, the universe, and God. Therefore, we can only identify who we really are in our relationship with these

realities. If we do not know who we really are in terms of postmodern and pluralistic worldview, we may not effectively fulfill our mission for the world in the new century.

We cannot restrict spirituality to only being related to our inner life and anthropocentric dimension like traditional understandings anymore. Spirituality is related with everything in human life. There is nothing that is not related with spirituality in human life. It is the human nature that makes a true human being a human being. A human identity must be defined by spirituality. What kind of spirituality we have decides what kind of people we are. Gustavo Gutierrez says "spirituality is not restricted to the so-called traditional religious aspects of life, such as prayer, meditation, worshipping God. It is not limited to one sector but is all-embracing, because the whole of human life, personal and communal, is involved in the journey. Spirituality is a part of life that gives a profound unity to our prayer, thought, and action."¹ Spirituality is related to all of human lives journeys. Spirituality touches every dimension of human life. Spirituality embraces our thought and action in our daily life. It is related to socio-political, psychological, cultural, educational, and religious dimension etc. As Gutierrez writes, spirituality is like living water.² As we cannot live without drinking water, we cannot become a human being without human spirit. All human beings have their own spirituality. The characteristics of the human spirituality depend upon a human's own understanding about our neighbor, natural world and God. All human beings have a deep

¹ Gustavo Gutierrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983), 88.

² Ibid., 37. "The life signified in the image of water comes to us through encounter with the Lord."

yearning for knowing oneself. According to the traditional religious teachings, the only way to find the true self begins from to encounter with the Ultimate Being. For Christians, the Ultimate Being is God who reveals Himself/Herself through Jesus Christ. The uniqueness of Christian spirituality appears in how Christians truly follow Jesus' foot print in their daily life. Christian spirituality is based upon the teachings and lives of Jesus Christ in the Bible.

However, the question is what does it mean to be a Christian in the postmodern world? In order to define Christian spirituality in the postmodern and pluralistic society, first of all, we should define what it means to be a Christian today. Usually, a Christian is defined as a follower of Jesus. However, throughout Christian history, the meaning of following Jesus Christ has changed. According to the change of our historical and cultural environments, our theological understanding about God, Church, Christ and humans has been changed under the influence of historical events and social changes. Therefore every generation has to redefine what Christian spirituality really is and what it means to be a Christian today. The old concept of Christian spirituality is not always useable in the postmodern world. Without concern for the real world, we cannot define Christian spirituality.

Especially, for the Korean immigrants who live in the city of Los Angeles, the most pluralistic society in the world, defining Christian spirituality is very important. As citizens of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, Korean immigrants need to confirm their understandings of Christian spirituality in terms of postmodern worldview. In my personal opinion, for the Korean immigrants, the following six dimensions are basically important when preparing for a new century. As I already mentioned above, those are

theological, socio-political, ecclesiastical, Biblical, ecological, and our experiential dimensions. In order to make a spiritual nurturing curriculum that is to equip Korean immigrants for the coming new century, I think that those six dimensions need to be a concern. Following, I will explore a ruin of Korean Christian spirituality within each of their six dimensions.

Theological Dimension

In the theological dimension, encountering God is the essence of the Christian spirituality because the concept of God defines and orients a whole way of life and understanding. The problem is that our understanding of God is very different from one another in the postmodern world. According to the traditional Western theological understanding, "God is the transcendent Being, and the word God refers to a personal, purposive being, perfect in goodness and supreme in power, who created the world, acts providentially in it."³

According to the traditional Western theology, God has all of the creativity, the world has none. God is the external creator and controller. All of nature obeys God's law. However, through the experience of World War I and World War II, people began to doubt the existence of God. If God is omnipotent and perfect in goodness and supreme in power, how can the terrible evil still exist in this world? The existence of evil is the most powerful reason for rejecting the existence of God. "The problem of evil is constituted by the apparent contradiction between the alleged goodness and power of God, on the one

³ David Ray Griffin, God and Religion in the Postmodern World (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 52.

hand, and the experienced fact of evil, on the other.”⁴ It is contradict the doctrine of an all-good and omnipotent deity.

In this situation, the theology of the death of God⁵ emerged in the theological world. Under the influence of this change, all of the theologians began to insist on both “situation ethics” and “situation theology.” The individual became the barometer to calculate the truth. The Church lost her authority. Simultaneously, people began to have critical and scientific independent thinking and assimilated with the secular spirit. As a result, traditional Christianity has declined and science gradually has replaced the function of Christianity. For the young generation, science is more powerful than religion.

As a result, people cannot help but change the traditional ideas about God in very different ways. In the case of John Robinson, he rejects the dualism inherent in neo-orthodoxy which makes God and humanity totally distinct. “A statement is ‘theological’ not because it relates to a particular Being called ‘God,’ but because it asks *ultimate* questions about the meaning of existence: it asks what, at the level of *theos*, at the level of its deepest mystery, is the reality and significance of our life.”⁶ John Robinson insisted that God can no longer be considered as a super natural Being out of the world. Rather, God is “within,” as the ground of our being.

⁴ Ibid., 52.

⁵ John B. Cobb, Jr., Process Theology as Political Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 66.

⁶ John A. T. Robinson, Honest to God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 49.

Moreover, since the 1960s, the theological world began to meet a new age of religious pluralism or the age of inter-religious dialogue. Until the beginning of 1960,⁷ the world of theology had been dominated by Western Christianity. In the name of the great commandment,⁸ from the beginning of Christianity, the Western Christian thought that was dominated by European whites spread out to all the world, especially after the industrial revolution. Unfortunately, the great Christian missionary expansion coincided with the imperialistic colonial expansion in the last three centuries.

After the emergence of religious pluralism, in the light of the third world eye, receiving mission means not to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ but to be brainwashed by the Western culture and philosophy. In reality, the third world people have been forced to throw away all of their own traditional value systems in order to become Christians. However, nobody totally took over one's own cultural clothes. Even though they could change their indigenous cultural clothes into the Western scientific worldview

⁷ Deane William Fenn, Contemporary American Theologies, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), 21. "The general temper of the 1960s can be characterized by the phrase 'the domination of the secular spirit.' This new dramatic mood had a profound impact on theological thinking. Secular theology succeeded neo-orthodoxy as the major Protestant theological movement of the 1960s. Secularism is the conviction that the only real world for humankind is that of the temporal and transient, a world knowable essentially through the methods of the natural sciences." According to the result, both "situation ethics" and "situation theology" produced in theological world. As a result, The church lost her authority and the traditional religion began to decline and rise the secular spirit in theology.

⁸ Matt. 28:18-20: "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

externally, nobody could internally escape the power of their culture that is throughout their heart.

One of the responses to the religious pluralism is the appearance of process theology. According to process theology, God is not coercive but a lure, God is not static and unchangeable but a creative force which continues to move toward greater fulfillment. Process theologians stress the organic unity constantly evolving toward greater enrichment and fulfillment. God's consequent nature is always in process of development, a view of God aptly described in Charles Hartshorne's phrase "divine relativity." God is dipolar, being both relative and absolute at the same time. God is "that factor in the universe which establishes what-is-not as relevant to what-is, and lures the world toward new forms of realization. Since God is not in complete control of the events of the world, the occurrence of genuine evil is not incompatible with God's beneficence toward all his creatures."⁹ According to Griffin, "God neither controls all things nor interrupts the natural process here and there. God does not coerce, but persuades. God does not create unilaterally, but inspires the creatures to create themselves by instilling new feelings of importance in them."¹⁰

Entering into the 1960s, another big change was the appearance of the Liberation theology in the Latin American context. Liberation theologians began to reinterpret the Bible and the western traditional theological concepts in their own economic, social,

⁹ John B. Cobb and David Ray Griffin, Process Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 53.

¹⁰ Griffin, God and Religion in the Postmodern World, 25.

political, cultural context. For liberation theologians, the most important thing is not right thinking and talking about the nature of God, but the explication of the condition of the oppressed people for the purpose of alleviating their inhuman plight. Gustavo Gutierrez, one of the leading exponent of liberation theology, expounds it in this way.

In a continent like Latin America, the main challenge does not come from the nonbeliever but from the nonhuman-- that is, the human being who is not recognized as such by the prevailing social order. These are the poor and exploited people, the ones who are systematically and legally despoiled of their being human, those who scarcely know what a human being might be. These nonhumans do not call into question our religious world so much as they call into question our economic, social, political, and cultural world.¹¹

For liberation theologians, orthodoxy is less important than orthopraxis. If God is ideological, philosophical, and individual concepts in the Western tradition, for liberation theology, "God is a liberating God, a living God and the friend of life,"¹² who is directly involved in their suffering daily life. For the poor in Latin America, God is liberator, revealed only in the concrete historical context of liberation of the poor and oppressed.

In this situation, Liberation theologians understand Christian spirituality in a new way. Gustavo Gutierrez elaborates the new understanding of spirituality.

What we see here is an authentic spirituality-- that is, a way of being Christian. It is from this rich experience of the following of Jesus that liberation theology emerges: the following constitutes the practice- at once commitment and prayer-- on which liberation theology reflects. The increasing number of Latin theological works on spirituality in recent years are not as it were an appendix to works on other themes; they

¹¹ Ibid., 62.

¹² Gustavo Gutierrez, The God of Life (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991), 29.

represent rather a deeper penetration of the very wellspring from which this kind of theological thinking flows.¹³

In the eyes of liberation theologians, spirituality is concerned with not only individual inner life but also embracing all of human daily life experiences. Gustavo Gutierrez says, for the poor in Latin America, spirituality is a collective and ecclesiastical thing.

The spirituality being born in Latin America is the spirituality of the church of the poor, to which Pope John XXIII called all of us, the spirituality of an ecclesiastical community that is trying to make effective its solidarity with the poorest of this world. It is a collective, ecclesiastical spirituality that, without losing anything of its universal perspective, is stamped with the religious outlook of an exploited and believing people.¹⁴

Through the emergence of liberation theology, human life experiences and uniqueness of historical and cultural contexts became crucial issues in the theological world. Liberation theology has blown a new wind to the black theology, feminist theology, and Asian theologies such as Minjung theology. After the emergence of liberation theology, the understanding of God became very diverse. For the oppressed and poor people, God is a liberator, justice, love and a warrior. For feminist theologians, God is a friend and mother.

Black theology emerged also in the 1960s. Black people had struggled for their freedom from the earliest days of their captivity in the New World. Practically, for black people, Christian faith was a means of survival until before 1960s. Although, there were a

¹³ Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1973), xxxii.

¹⁴ Gutierrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells, 29.

lot of endeavors for their freedom, it was in the 1960s that black people began to theologize their suffering life. The civil rights movement and black power movement greatly contributed to the emergence of black theology in the 1960s. According to James H. Evans, Jr., "The sociopolitical context for the reradicalization of African-American Christianity in the twentieth century is the civil rights/black power movement."¹⁵ Especially, the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. was the most important event to religious and theological reawakening.

From the winter of 1955 to the winter of the following year, despite insults, physical assault, bombings, and shootings, black people walked for freedom. And as they walked millions of their brothers and sisters took new courage and began what was certainly the most remarkable mass movement of nonviolence since the protests in India led by Gandhi in the 1930s.¹⁶

The civil right movement was a starting point of the inner revolution of the African-Americans and their liberation. We cannot disregard the many former struggles for black freedom. However, the former struggles failed to awaken the consciousness of all African-Americans. In contrast to that, through the civil rights movement, African-Americans really found their self-identity not as an inferior people to whites, but as American citizens as well as whites. Simultaneously, we cannot disregard the challenge of the black Muslims led by Malcolm X. The critic and challenge of the Malcolm X about the Christianity was very constructive for theological renewal. In Malcom's eyes,

¹⁵ James H. Evans, Jr., We have Been Believers (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 3.

¹⁶ Gayraud S. Wilmore, Black Religion and Black Radicalism, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983), 176.

Christianity was just an instrument to legitimize the black status quo as slaves. For Malcolm, "Christianity and Islam are radical opposites. Christianity is white nationalism; Islam is black nationalism. Christianity enslaves blacks; Islam liberates them. Christianity divides blacks; Islam unites them."¹⁷

Although Malcom's challenge was the main source of dechristianization, simultaneously, it was the main source of rechristianization. Through his criticisms, black Christians could reevaluate their Christian faith in terms of black liberation. The black power movement followed by the civil rights movement stimulated black theologians to theologize and interpret the experience of black's suffering and struggle under the dehumanized white racist social structure. In this point, if we say the western traditional theological tool is a philosophical and ideological approach, then black theological approach is a contextual and socio-political approach. James H. Cone well indicates the point.

Black people did not devise various philosophical arguments for God's existence, because the God of black experience was not a metaphysical idea. He was the God of history, the Liberator of the oppressed from bondage. Jesus was not an abstract Word of God, but God's Word made flesh who came to set the prisoner free. He was the "Lamb of God" that was born in Bethlehem and was slain on Golgotha's hill.¹⁸

¹⁷ James H. Cone, Martin and Malcolm and America (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991), 173.

¹⁸ James H. Cone, God of the Oppressed (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1974), 55.

In this point, we can see the main source of black spirituality. Through their suffering experiences, black people could easily identify themselves with the suffering Israelites. In the light of the suffering black people, God is a liberator and an enabler for justice.

In the case of feminist theology, it focuses on the women's experience. In terms of women's experience, feminist theologians criticize male dominant chauvinism.

The uniqueness of feminist theology lies not in its use of the criterion of experience but rather in its use of women's experience, which has been almost entirely shut out of theological reflection in the past. The use of women's experience in feminist theology, therefore, explodes as a critical force, exposing classical theology, including its codified traditions, as based on male experience rather than on universal human experience.¹⁹

Feminist theologians criticize that traditional understanding of God is oriented by patriarchal social system and patriarchal socio-political philosophy. According to the Western traditional theology, God is the father, omnipotent and omnipresent God, the king, the ruler. This traditional idea of God reflects on the male dominant patriarchal culture and society. Rosemary Ruether criticizes that "the naming of males as norms of authentic humanity has caused women to be scapegoats for sin and marginalized in both original and redeemed humanity."²⁰ In this situation, "Feminist struggle for political equality and social freedom that began in the 1960s included the transformation of patriarchal religious ideas and institutions and the creation of new ones."²¹

¹⁹ Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 13.

²⁰ Ibid., 19.

²¹ Roger S. Gottlieb, ed. "A Philosophical and Social Perspective on Contemporary Spirituality," in A New Creation, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1990), 11.

In this point, we can see the fact that all ideas of God are metaphorical languages. Elizabeth Johnson raises a serious methodological question about how one speaks about God. According to the historical and cultural change, the language about God has been changed. It has a history. In order to illustrate the issue, she points to an example from Aquinas who argued that non-biblical term “person” can be applied to God. It implies that the language about God can be changed into new language through each human’s experience.²²

Now, we can conclude that the words for God can be differently understood and used by cultural and historical differences. We should not limit our thinking to only one jar, so called Christianity. If we recognize the fact that every human being has a limitation to open our hearts to God, we should know that our understanding about God is limited by our life experiences based on our historical and cultural background. It means each human being has one’s own unique experience of God. No one can disregard others’ experiences of God. If my life experience is important for me, others’ experiences are also important to them.

The world is changing very fast. According to the changing of the world, our theological understanding needs to change to be able to fit the spirit of the world. Korean Christian immigrants need to wake up from the dormant in the old religious paradigm. Korean Christian immigrants need to understand that everyone can experience of God

²² Elizabeth A. Johnson, She Who Is (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994), 6-8.

very differently. It is very important attitude as American citizens who live in the postmodern and pluralistic society.

Ecclesiastical Dimension

In this part, I want to explore Christian spirituality in terms of the unity of the Church. The Church is called to be united in the Holy Spirit. And yet, Korean churches do not embody this reality, being fragments denominationally. This fragmentation is a spiritual challenge.

Jesus Christ is the corner stone of the Church (Matt. 21:42) and the head of the Church (Eph. 1:22). The Church is the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22). The Church was founded by Jesus Christ to fulfill God's will in this world (Matt. 16:15-20). All Christians are parts of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:5; Cor. 12:12). "There is one body and one Spirit-just as you were called to one hope when you were called- one Lord. One faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Eph. 4:4-6). The Church is a living organism that Jesus Christ is the head and all Christians are parts of the Body.

When we read Acts 2:1-13, the Church was formed with fulfillment of the Holy Spirit. Since the Babel tower was destroyed (Gen. 11:1-9), human beings could communicate with one another in the power of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecostal event (Acts 2:5-13). In other words, the beginning of the Church was the historical event that showed that human beings could be united together in the Holy Spirit. All Christians are those who are called by God to build up the Body of Christ in the world. The role of the Church is to be salt and light in the world (Matt. 5:13-14). It is the meaning of existence of the Church. Therefore, all Churches need to be united in the Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, Churches are divided into many denominations by their dogma. Sometimes, they strictly hold on to their dogma rather than the teaching of the Bible. Therefore, all churches working together for the one purpose is very difficult, especially for the Korean church. It is a very serious problem from the beginning of the Korean mission. It is deeply related to the history of the Korean mission. The Korean Protestant mission was begun by American missionaries, Apenzella, a Methodist missionary, and Underwood, a Presbyterian missionary, in 1884. From the beginning of the mission, those two denominations competed with each other to propagate Korea. They divided the Korean territory for the mission. There was no unity of the Christian mission in the early Korean mission age.

Moreover, the Korean churches were severely split under the influence of Japanese colonialism. In order to colonize Korea, the Japanese government forcibly demanded emperor worship. At that time, most of the Christian leaders rejected their demand for worship of the emperor. Many pastors were killed for their rejection of this worshipping emperor. On the other hand, the other pastors were given up Japanese oppression. After that, Korean churches were seriously split. Nowadays, there are 94 denominations just among the Protestant churches in Korea.²³ Up until now, Korean churches are split into several denominations. In order to fulfill God's mission in the pluralistic world, Korean churches need to learn to cooperate each other.

²³ Won Gue Lee, The Reality and Prospect of the Korean Church (Seoul: Biblical Study Press, 1994), 204.

Fortunately, in the constitution of the World Council of Churches, we can see a hope that all churches can work together in order to achieve the peace of the world. The World Council of Churches is “a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”²⁴

In the constitution of the WCC, we can find the capability of the unity of the Church. That is to say, all churches stand on the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior. Therefore, in any case, all churches cannot be divided by their dogma. All churches must stand together for unity. In order to achieve unity in diversity, the WCC suggested finding a basic agreement on Baptism,²⁵ Eucharist²⁶ and Ministry. In order to achieve the goal, naturally, all churches must get over the doctrinal division on these three. If all churches strictly hold on to their dogma without reconciliation, in fact, they are not operating in the will of Jesus Christ. As the Bible says, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). Jesus Christ’s will is to achieve the kingdom of God in the world. The church must remain a channel for

²⁴ World Council of Churches. Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, Faith and Order Prayer, no. 111 (Geneva: WCC, 1982), vii.

²⁵ Ibid., 3. “The need to recover baptismal unity is at the heart of the ecumenical task as it is central for the realization of genuine partnership within the Christian Communities.”

²⁶ Ibid., 10-17. “In history of the Church there have been various attempts to understand the mystery of the real and unique presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Although all churches have a different meaning about the Eucharist, we can find the basic principle that the eucharistic liturgy is performed in the name of Jesus Christ as our savior.”

achievement of the vision of the Bible. As Christians, all of the churches need to work together for the kingdom of God.

In this situation, in order to achieve the reconciliation between churches, we must realize the true meaning of Christian spirituality. Traditionally, the word "spirituality" has been interpreted as the concern of otherworldliness or individualistic concern. Robert McAfee Brown cites McLeod, founder of the Iona Community, and agrees that, "it is indeed dangerous. It allows us either to dismiss the notion of spirituality as irrelevant to our immediate lives, or to attach so much importance to it that it preempts the legitimate attention we ought to give to our immediate lives."²⁷ The word "spirituality" needs to be interpreted within the relationship between God and human beings. Robert McAfee Brown redefined Christian spirituality as following:

Spirituality includes all of life. It would describe the way in which Christians live every aspect of their existence, including politics and merchandising as well as prayer and meditation. The fullness of reality would be the reference point, not some isolated aspect of reality. The word 'holistic' would figure in the discussion; perhaps John Carmody would remind the others that all the domains of human existence- ecology, economics, health, prayer, politics, sexuality and education are in the province of spirituality.²⁸

Spirituality relates to all of human life. Therefore, we must understand spirituality both in social dimension and individual dimension. The existence of the church in the world should be a salvation ark for the people. Korean immigrant churches must overcome denominationalism. Korean immigrant churches need to develop an inclusive

²⁷ Robert McAfee Brown, Spirituality and Liberation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 111.

²⁸ Ibid., 116-17.

theology. Without cooperation with each other, Korean churches cannot find their meaning of existence in this society.

Socio-Political Dimension

Human beings are social animals. It means that human spirituality cannot be separated from a society and their own culture. "The relationship between a society and its members' spirituality is reciprocal. A society's customs and laws, on the one hand, reflect the spirituality of its members. The spirituality of the members, on the other hand, is largely shaped by the nature of the society."²⁹ Even though human beings are not simply products of our natural and social environments, it is the truth that human beings are deeply influenced by our social structure and environment. According to D. E. Miller, a community is the cradle of our life. "We develop our life style in community. All communities have various elements such as roles, customs, institutions, traditions, and symbolic culture. Individuals within a community are shaped by community patterns and at the same time give shape to those pattern."³⁰

Miller clearly shows us the relationship between human beings and their social environment. Human spirituality is formed under the influence of our social structure and culture. Even though human beings are creative beings, nobody can escape the gravity of our social environment. Therefore, when we study human spirituality, we should study

²⁹ David Ray Griffin, "Postmodern Spirituality and Society," in Spirituality and Society, ed. David Ray Griffin (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 2.

³⁰ Donald E. Miller, Story and Context (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 11-22.

our social environment and culture. I think we can see our society in terms of two dimensions. One is macroview, and another is microview.

In terms of the macro view, we human beings are confronted with a new civilization. Alvin Toffler called this new civilization the "Third Wave." "Humanity faces a quantum leap forward. It faces the deepest social upheaval and creative restructuring of all time. Without clearly recognizing it, we are engaged in building a remarkable new civilization from the ground up. This is the meaning of the Third Wave."³¹ According to Alvin Toffler, the Third Wave totally and radically is changing all of human life styles such as, our work, our family life, our sexual attitudes and personal morality from the bottom. In terms of a macro view, our society that is based on industrialism, so called the Second Wave, is in crisis. Toffler says:

Second Wave systems are in crisis. Thus we find crisis in the welfare systems. Crisis in the postal systems. Crisis in the school systems. Crisis in the health-delivery systems. Crisis in the urban systems. Crisis in the international financial system. The nation-state itself is in crisis. The Second Wave value system is in crisis. Specially, the collapse of Second Wave civilization has created an epidemic of personality crisis.³²

According to Toffler, all happenings that are related with human problems in the world are produced by this crisis of the Second Wave. He says, up until now, our civilization, so called industrialism, is "heavily dependent on fossil fuels, factory production, the nuclear family, the corporation, mass education, and the mass media."³³

³¹ Toffler, Third Wave, 26.

³² Ibid., 139.

³³ Ibid., 94.

However, nowadays, these social structures and systems are replacing new civilization so called, "Space Age," "Information Age," "Electronic Era," "Technotronic Age," "Post-Industrial Society", or "Super-Industrial Society."³⁴ This new civilization affects all human lives, such as our family system, our economy, political systems, our religious and moral values. "It challenges all the old power relationships, the privileges and prerogatives of the endangered elite of today, and provides the backdrop against which the key power struggles of tomorrow will be fought."³⁵

In the light of the spiritual dimension, if Christians do not properly respond to the new civilization, Christianity can fall into a serious spiritual crisis. Civilization clashes or cultural clashes can produce anomie to people who are oriented by the existing social systems and moral values. Nowadays, we are confronted with new civilizations that we never imagined in the past. Whenever a new civilization emerged, people suffered because of experiencing anomie. We can see a good example in the Old Testament. In Genesis chapter 11, we can see the story of the Tower of Babel. The story tells us of the shock of an appearance of a new civilization in human history.

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth." (Gen. 11: 1-4)

³⁴ Ibid., 25.

³⁵ Ibid., 26

People experienced a new civilization in that they could use brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar to build a tower and city. However, the result of the new civilization produced the tragedy of the scattering of people. When we see human history, an emergence of the new civilization produced a serious crisis in human history. According to Alvin Toffler, the Industrial Revolution in Europe, the Civil War in the United States, the Meiji Restoration in Japan, and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia were deeply related to the industrial revolution.³⁶ In other words, those were the production of the civilization clash between the agricultural civilization and industrial civilization.

Nowadays, we are confronted with a crisis of the clash of the civilization between the industrial civilization and a new civilization that is appearing everywhere in the postmodern world. In my personal view, the shock of the new civilization that we are confronting is closely related with the development of the computer skill. In human history, there was a tremendous reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. All of the basic theories of modern science were produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Through those kind of scientific developments, human beings' mental and spiritual horizons were enormously enlarged. Especially the development of the printing press contributed to spreading the science information to the world.³⁷ Since that time, people mentally began to leave the territory of Christianity in the western

³⁶ Toffler, Third Wave, 39-40.

³⁷ Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity, vol. 2 (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 689.

society. The development of the printing press drastically affected social change and human spirituality.

Nowadays, we stand at the gateway to the twenty first century. We human beings are entering a new great reformation of the printing press. It is the innovation of the computer and artificial satellites. The more the innovation of computers and artificial satellites develops, the more human beings' mental and spiritual horizons are enlarged. Specially, young generations are entering into the new information age that comes from a new reformation of the printing press, so- called the computer inter-net. Now human beings can catch all of the information that comes from everywhere in the world in their home. In terms of spiritual dimension, this coming new age must be a totally different age from the past. Nobody can imagine what our future society will be like. Nowadays, people are confronted with spiritual crisis by the challenge of the new scientific wave.

Developing the technology of transportation, mass communication, and mass media, the world is becoming smaller and smaller. Now we easily use the term "global village" without any hesitation. When one believe system meets another, one religion meets another, and one culture meets another, the Western traditional thought about God, Christology, human beings, and Christian spirituality cannot help but change in the postmodern and pluralistic society. In this situation, we Christians should realize that we should redefine what Christian spirituality is.

In terms of the micro view, we should be concerned with our community, Los Angeles, which is the most pluralistic society in the world. Our community is a multi ethnic and a multi cultural society. Therefore, we should be concerned with other ethnic cultures and their traditions in order to study Christian spirituality. Without concern for

our real social situation, studying Christian spirituality is meaningless. We should be concerned with our community which is composed of many ethnicity and cultures.

The ethnic composition of the US population has been greatly affected by changes in the types of immigrants. "Leon F. Bouvier of the Population Reference Bureau Inc. has done a series of projections which suggest that by 2020 the percentage of blacks, Hispanics and Asians in the population will reach 35 percent, compared with 20 percent today. By 2080, as much as 40 percent of the population will be immigrants and the descendants of those who arrived after 1980."³⁸ While the number of immigrants are growing in the US, the USA is altering everything in society, from politics and education to industry, values and culture. For example, "While prior generations of immigrants believed they had to learn English quickly to survive, many Hispanics now maintain that the Spanish language is inseparable from their ethnic and cultural identity, and seek to remain bilingual, if not primarily Spanish-speaking, for life."³⁹

According to the growing number of immigrants, this phenomenon is occurring in all ethnic groups in the USA. As a result, "the problem facing society during periods of heavy immigration has been to maintain national unity while accommodating a huge diversity of languages and cultures."⁴⁰ Nowadays, "racial and ethnic conflicts have

³⁸ Harrison Donnelly, "Immigration Still the Golden Door?" Editorial Research Reports 1, no. 22 (June 1986): 446.

³⁹ William A. Henry III, "Beyond the Melting Pot," Time, 9 April 1990, 29.

⁴⁰ Donnelly, 440.

become an ugly fact of American life everywhere, from working-class ghettos to college campuses.”⁴¹

One of the good examples is the LA uprising in 1992. “The 1992 Los Angeles uprising revealed the complexity of interracial relations today. A different multiracial social reality requires radical approaches to address the structural issues of economic and political inequality, and issues of race and representation.”⁴² The uprising was not the problem of just the Black community, Hispanic community and Korean community. The uprising was deeply related with the issues of racism in the United States. Racial discrimination and inequality is still a potential bomb that can explode at any time in the city of Los Angeles.

In this situation, we can clearly say that, without social justice, we could not preach Christian love. Likewise, without concern for social justice, we cannot talk about Christian spirituality. Christian spirituality cannot be separated from justice and love. We should repent from our own ethno-centricism. Now, we should listen to the voices of suffering people. The crying of the oppressed people is the crying of Christ who thirsted for righteousness on the cross. As an oppressed people, for me, God is a suffering God for all creatures that are suffering from the sin of human self-centeredness. On the cross, we should find the will of God. In the light of the cross, we should reform our spirituality.

⁴¹ Henry, 29.

⁴² Edward T. Chang, “From Chicago to Los Angeles-- Changing the Site of Race Relations,” in Los Angeles-- Struggles toward Multiethnic Community, eds. Edward T. Chang and Russell C. Leong (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 3.

theology, culture, and our daily life. God is not a god for whom wants to fulfill his/her own self-desires. God is a loving God who loves all creatures equally.

If a religion supports only one ethnic group or the powerful and rich group, the religion is just a product of the ideology of the group that is an existing power group. As Christians, we believe that the essence of Christianity is to love God and our neighbor. If the essence of a religion is distorted by only one power group, the religion is a hypocritical religion even if most of the people follow the teaching of the religion. Within the hypocritical religious system, an individual faith and righteousness is just a means of evil power because practically all individuals have a role in supporting the evil system. In other words, all we Christians must check our faith in the light of social justice. Christian love and faith never can be separated from social justice. Without social justice, Christian individual love and faith is only for religious people who believe they are Christians. In my point of view, the traditional Christian concept of "neighbor" is not for others but only for the white. In order to fulfill the commandment of Jesus Christ, to love your God and neighbor, we Christians must check our Christian faith in the light of social justice.

At this point, I propose a new spirituality that should be rooted in the relational centered spirituality. Korean immigrant Christians should realize that "people are connected with themselves, one another, with social systems, with the earth, and with transcendent reality."⁴³ Korean immigrant Christians should overcome modern individual centered spirituality. The origin of racism is a cultural and racial superiority. Up until now, the white people think that all colored people are culturally, morally, racially, and

⁴³ Moore, 2.

even religiously, inferior to them. In the modern pluralistic society, as Christians, Korean immigrant Christians should establish a true Christian spirituality that everybody can be recognized as the children of God and people with dignity. For the new century, Our Christian spirituality should be established on the faith that all human beings are equal before God who created human beings in the image of God.

Biblical Dimension

The Bible is the corner stone of Christian faith and doctrine. The Bible has been the primary source and criterion for Christian faith and doctrine. Through the Bible, we can meet God the creator and the living Christ who works in the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the teaching of the Scripture, we could believe that God created all creatures and all of the universes. All Christians believe that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Up until now, the doctrinal teaching is as follows:

The biblical authors, illumined by the Holy Spirit, bear witness that in Christ the world is reconciled to God. The Bible bears authentic testimony to God's self-disclosure in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as well as in God's work of creation, in the pilgrimage of Israel, and in the Holy Spirit's ongoing activity in human history. As we open our minds and hearts to the Word of God through the words of human beings inspired by the Holy Spirit, faith is born and nourished, our understanding is deepened, and the possibilities for transforming the world become apparent to us.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ United Methodist Church (U.S.). The Book of Discipline (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1996), 75.

For Christians, the Bible is the sacred text and criterion for the Christian belief system. According to the traditional belief system, the Bible was written by the verbal inspiration. However, in the postmodern society, the traditional authority of the Bible is practically totally collapsed. Because after the enlightenment, developing of the scientific methodology in academic fields, the historical-critical methodology was gradually adapted in studying the Bible. Beginning from the twentieth century, the bloom of the historical criticism about the Bible incurred the radical change of Christian faith and theological studies.

Until the medieval age, people believed the absolute authority of the Bible. People believed that the Bible was written by the divine people who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. People believed that the Bible was infallible. However, according to the invention of the printing press, it was possible to produce several hundred copies of the Bible without any errors. As a result, many people easily could study the Bible. Through increasing the biblical study, the discipline of "textual criticism" arose in the field of the study. From that time, in scholastic circles, biblical scholars began to find internal conflicts in the Bible itself. They gradually began to doubt that the Bible was infallible. In addition to that, many scholars began to doubt the historical Jesus. They insisted that the Gospel is not biography of Jesus written for the purpose of the historical records by the original disciples of Jesus. The authority of the Bible has gradually collapsed as a result of this.

Beginning with the twentieth century, the two world wars seriously influenced the human worldview. As a result of the wars, although the optimistic view of humanity was changed, science was splendidly developed compared with prior to that time. People had

come to believe in the omnipotence of science. People began to worship the power of science. People began to think that human beings can make a living creature by a biotechnology of themselves. These optimistic views about science have influenced in all academic fields. Scientific inductive method was adopted in studying the biblical research.

After World War I, in biblical studies, the form criticism was developed in the circle of the German scholars. "The first fundamental works of the form-critical method of studying the synoptic gospel originated with Karl Ludwig Schmidt, Martin Dibelius, Rudolf Bultmann, Martin Albert and Georg Bertram."⁴⁵ They analyzed the traditions of the Bible in detail. As a result of the form criticism, it was approved that the tradition of the life of Jesus in the Gospel is not related to biographies of historical Jesus.⁴⁶ They insisted that the Bible was formed for the purpose of the church by early Christianity. Especially, Bultman demythologized all of the stories about Jesus in the Bible.

Following the form criticism, after World War II, redaction criticism was incurred by the following the scholars: Guinter Bornkamm, Hans Conzelmann, and Willi Marxen.⁴⁷ They were concerned about the intentions of the editors of the Bible. They found several evidences in the synoptic Gospels. As a result, they insist that the Gospel is

⁴⁵ E. Basil Redlich, "Form Criticism," in Form Criticism and Redaction Criticism, ed., Deuk Joong Kim (Seoul: Methodist Theological Seminary Press, 1985), 116.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 16.

⁴⁷ Robert H. Stein, "What is Redaktionsgeschichte?" in Form Criticism and Redaction Criticism, 137-41.

the new creative work of the editors. After a time, the traditional understandings of the Bible were radically changed. The result of the redactional study is that the Bible is human work. It means that the Gospel is not different from any other secular book. As a result, in the academic fields, it is natural that many scientific-critical methodology was adopted to study the Bible.

After that, various historical criticisms blossomed to study the Bible, such as the structural analysis, material analysis, sociological analysis, etc. The various methodologies in the other academic fields were adopted for the study of the Bible. Especially, in the last of the 1960s, the development of sociology influenced the study of the Bible. Theologians adopted the sociological approach to study the Bible. They insisted that all Scriptures must be studied in the historical-sociological context. They began to recognize that the Bible was social production that included special historical and cultural situations.

In addition to that, since the 1960s, the blooming of the liberation theology, feminist theology, black theology, and Asian theology, in the theological field, human experience became a very important source for interpreting the Bible. The Third world theologians began to develop their own theological ways. New hermeneutics began to develop in the third world. They began to interpret the Bible through their own life experience. Latin Americans, Asians, Africans, and Native Americans began to theologize their own life experiences. Against the Western imperialism, the Third world theologians had developed their own hermeneutical tools that were lifted up from their own cultural traditions and their life experiences of suffering. The reason is that everybody has one's own eye glasses for interpreting the Bible. Traditionally, only the

elite group or power group oriented people by their own Biblical view. However, now we realize that all human beings have their own hermeneutical tools. Everybody interprets the Bible through their own eye-glasses. Nobody can judge the others' interpretations. There is no only one way to interpret the Bible in the church. The Bible is always open to everybody. Because all human beings have their own intrinsic values and experiences, even though there is a dangerous point that the Bible can be misinterpreted by human selfishness, we should respect others' perspective. On this point, we should recognize that whenever we read any book, we are already involving the process of Exegesis. Exegesis is a normal activity in which all of us engage every day of our lives. Although we do not label it as exegesis, whenever we read a text, we are involved in the process of exegesis. It is a process of communication. Whenever we read a book, we naturally recreate the book through our imagination, pre-conception and our own glasses which are formed by our cultural background, and educational background. When we are reading a text, our imagination, pre-conception, cultural background and educational background can become noises which interrupt to understand the text. Therefore we could interpret the book completely different from the intention of the author. Especially, when we interpret the Bible, there are many problems such as historical gaps, cultural gaps and geographical gaps between the world of the Bible and our modern life. Therefore, in order for accurate exegesis, we must consider the world of the Bible. We are not the original audience but the third party. The third party must seek to understand the communication by assuming the role of or by empathizing with both the sender and receiver. We can only enter the world of the Bible through our imagination and the study

of the relevant historical sources. As a result, we cannot help but receive the help of the historical criticism for the Bible exegesis.

In addition to that, there is another problem when a document is translated from one language to another. A language barrier intrudes into the interpretive or exegetical process. If an English speaking person wants to read a German language textbook or receives a letter from a German, for example, the reader or interpreter is confronted with special problems. The English interpreter must either acquire sufficient knowledge of German to read the text or get a translator who does not have the language barrier. At that time, he/she must be involved in a constant process of discovering valid functional isomorphs between languages on all levels. In other words, he/she must always be on the lookout for so-called “equivalent” words, grammatical structures and rhetorical features.

If we want to understand the word of God toward us, first of all, we must accurately exegete the Bible. However, unfortunately, we should recognize that nobody can accurately interpret the Bible because every human being has his/her own limitations. Even though God fully reveals God’s will, nobody cannot fully understand God’s will because every human being interprets God’s will in the light of their own worldview. Although God is not a limited Being, human beings cannot fully understand God’s will because all human beings are limited beings. Therefore, nobody can insist that one’s own hermeneutical tool is the only way for the interpretation of the Bible. Everybody can have their own hermeneutics and they can legitimize it. On the other hand, everybody should recognize that one’s own interpretation of the Bible may be serious enough to allow a distortion of the original meaning of the Bible. Therefore, we Christians need to always

open our hearts to other's interpretation of the Bible. We should cooperate with each other in finding a better interpretation of the Bible.

At this point, we should ask how we can find new hermeneutics that every human being can share and adopt from one another in the modern pluralistic society. If we recognize that all human beings have their own eye-glasses, and if everybody insists that their interpretation is the only way to exegesis the Bible, how can we harmonize and reconcile one another? Is there any solution to our having self-esteem on our own interpretation of the Bible as well as admitting and respecting other's interpretation?

At this point, I want to propose "a hermeneutic of sharing our story" as a new hermeneutical tool of the Bible. Through sharing our own experience, we can interpret the Bible in the light of many different angles, then we can more correctly understand the Bible in a wider perspective. I believe that the only solution is Jesus Christ. As Christians, we believe that following Jesus is a central theme in the New Testament. "Discipleship is rooted in the experience of an encounter with Jesus Christ. It is an encounter of friends (I no longer call you servants. Instead, I called you friends. John 15:15) in which the Lord takes the initiative and it is the point of departure for a journey."⁴⁸ In all truth, the search for God is the ultimate meaning of any and every spirituality. In terms of the biblical dimension, the center of Christian spiritual life is an encounter with Jesus Christ who was crucified on the cross for all human beings who are sinners. As Christians, we must follow Jesus' footprint. If we cannot follow Jesus' walking, we never can say that we are Christians. To be followers of Jesus requires that

⁴⁸ Gtierrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells, 33.

we walk with and be committed to God and all human beings. The Bible says "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:27). Even though all human beings are different from each other, we can find common ground that all human beings can be one in Christ. This is a profound and demanding spiritual experience that serves as the point of departure for following Jesus and for reflection on his words and deeds. "Spirituality is walking in freedom according to the Spirit of love and life. This walking has its point of departure in an encounter with the Lord. Such an encounter is a spiritual experience that produces and gives meaning to the freedom."⁴⁹

In summary, in terms of the biblical dimension, Christian spirituality is to follow Jesus' footsteps. Jesus was crucified on the cross for suffering people without any condition. This sacrificial love and life are the center of Christian spirituality. Jesus died for our sin and he was resurrected for all righteous who can willingly sacrifice themselves for one another. Jesus still says "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-38). As Christians, now we should ask ourselves: "Who is our neighbor?" Who can be included in the category of our neighbor? In the postmodern world, there should be included all human beings as well as the natural world in the category of our neighbor. Although all human beings have different hermeneutical tools for the interpretation of the Bible, if we want to be true disciples of Jesus Christ in the postmodern world, we need to reform our own

⁴⁹ Ibid., 35.

parochialism. Korean immigrant Christians, especially, need to develop a new hermeneutical tool for the interpretation of the Bible that can be shared with other ethnic groups in the pluralistic and multi-cultural society.

Ecological Dimension

We should ask ourselves “what does it mean to be a Christian” in the age of the ecological and nuclear crisis. The main goal of Church education is to cultivate our congregation’s spirituality to live as the disciples following the way of life in Jesus Christ. Nowadays, we cannot talk about Christian spirituality without concern for the ecological crises. The ecological crises are threatening all living things. Water, air, the earth are rapidly imbrued by the scrapped material of industry. The sea has become a garage for the scrapped material of the nuclear industry and the atmosphere is filled with hazardous gases. Especially, “Rectifying the ozone depletion is one of the greatest challenges we will ever face. Also, the earth is acidified by the scrapped material of chemical industry.”⁵⁰ These things are the cause of disease of the global village and the pain of all living creatures and God. According to John B. Cobb, these symptoms come from the misunderstanding of the idea of dominion by the readers of the Bible and the idol of the omnipotence of science by anthropocentrism.⁵¹

According to Genesis, human beings received God’s command, as stewards of all of the creatures. “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number.

⁵⁰ Earth Works Group, 50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth (Berkeley: EarthWorks Press, 1989), 9.

⁵¹ Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr., For the Common Good (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 387.

fill the earth and subdue it, Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Gen. 1:28). Traditional Christianity has interpreted the verse anthropocentric terms. The traditional interpretation in Western thought offers an idea that human beings can do anything for the human well-being. According to this thought, “Nature was considered something to be used for the convenience of human beings, not only plants and animals but the earth itself.”⁵² In this understanding, human beings have developed a modern scientific and industrial society.

As a result, up until now, nature has been totally exploited by human beings who are oriented by the anthropocentric worldview. The earth is getting full of nonrecyclable garbage. Land, sea, air, and even underground water are being polluted by industrial wastes. According to the population explosion of humanity, industrial development, and urbanization, ecological crisis, such as shortage of food, degradation of soil, overfishing in the seas, pollution of water, air, and forests, global warming, ozone depletion, deforestation, soil erosion etc., are rapidly increasing. An ecological crisis has become an urgent and important issue for survival. We should not delay to restore the sustainable system any more.

According to C. A. Bowers, the ecological crises are deeply related to Western modern cultural aspects oriented by “the myth of social progress.”⁵³ The myth boosts the

⁵² Randolph Crump Miller, “Ecological Theology and Religious Education.” in Theologies of Religious Education, ed. Randolph Crump Miller (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1995), 336.

⁵³ C. A. Bowers, Educating for an Ecologically Sustainable Culture (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 4.

anthropocentric worldview that modern technology can develop human well-being. However, the more modern technology develops, the more human beings become dependent beings. In his opinion, ecological crises are instigated by modern consumer-oriented culture. He criticizes the Western modern education and optimism that have been oriented by a modern technological and consumer-oriented culture. He strongly insists the modern Western educational policies are limited in addressing the dangers of ecological crises. The modern Western education is fostering people to destroy the ecosystem. Like his saying, all of the modern human beings have been oriented by the consumer-oriented culture and anthropocentric view of life. So human beings do not have concern that the earth is gradually dying through the pollution of air, soil, sea, and ground water etc.

In the name of individual freedom for opportunity, modern people are abusing God's creation without any limitation. In addition to that, "The irony is that the ways of thinking and valuing reinforced (conserved) by public schools and universities are still viewed by most educators as expressions of the most enlightened and progressive aspects of modern culture."⁵⁴ It is totally an incorrect way of understanding about nature.

After the industrial revolution, modern scientific technology rapidly developed without any limitation. In addition to that, capitalism has instigated human greed to fulfill their own material happiness oriented by anthropocentrism. After the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and East Germany, almost every nation is trying to change their national system into capitalism. Nowadays, the world is beginning to enter

⁵⁴ Ibid., 3.

an unlimited competition for economic interest for their own nations. Also, all of the rich nations never want to give up their economic privilege. As a result, the earth is destroying more and more seriously.

Now we are directly experiencing the ecological crises such as global warming, change of weather pattern, pollution of air and water, chemical toxins of all creatures, ozone depletion etc. Ecological crises are not abstract concepts. It is the most urgent and important issues in our modern society. In this ecological crises age, what does really it mean to be a Christian? How can we develop our Christian spirituality?

According to Randolph Crump Miller, the world is God's body. If we adopt this concept, we can recognize that "God is vulnerable and at risk. God is willing to suffer in the body of the world and to take the risk that God's body will be cared for."⁵⁵ In other words, if we destroy nature, it is destruction of God's body.

Ian Barbour suggests a new thought about all creatures. "All creatures are intrinsically valuable because each is a center of experience, though there are enormous gradations in the complexity and intensity of experience. In addition, by balancing immanence and transcendence, process thought encourages respect for nature."⁵⁶ This is the perspective of process theology. According to David Ray Griffin, "all the individuals of which the world is composed are experiences such apes, alligators, amoebae, and alpha particles. Because everything has experience, everything has intrinsic value or importance in and of itself. Nothing should be treated as a mere means to our end.

⁵⁵ Miller, "Ecological Theology and Religious Education," 344.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 344.

Everything deserves respect.”⁵⁷ If we recognize that all creatures have their own unique experiences, we should not disregard them in terms of our anthropocentric worldview. Revolution of our traditional understanding about the creatures can be a starting point to reform our Christian spirituality that can restore the polluted natural world. If we repent of ignoring other creatures’ suffering, we can step forward to restore our natural world. God is the creator. So God suffers with His/Her creatures who are suffering with environment disaster. If we believe in God the creator, we must work to restore nature.

In order to do that, first of all, we should reform our anthropocentric spirituality. We should know we are part of nature. If we recognize that we are part of nature, we cannot exploit nature for human beings any more. As one of the biggest institutions including Catholic and Protestant in the world, if all churches start to restore the earth, the world will be changed into a sustainable ecosystem. As Christians, if each of us are not totally born again for restoring our mother earth, all creatures can not be sustained any more. The best way for the restoring of the earth is to start with ourselves. As Christians, we have to work hard to save our natural resources and to create an unpolluted energy. We should participate in the process of making national policy and to reform public educational philosophy in terms of saving the natural world. In terms of Christian spirituality, the most important thing is to reform our Christian spirituality for restoring our natural world, and the body of God, the earth.

In order to do that, we need to reform our thought oriented by traditional theology and our habits oriented by modern consumer culture. It is not an easy way. In order to

⁵⁷ Griffin, God and Religion in the Postmodern World, 22-23.

fulfill that goal, Christian spirituality, our Christian social, political, cultural, and theological strategies should create concern of ecology. Ecological concern must be one of the centers of our Christian spiritual discipline. Human beings must realize that they are only part of nature and the ecosystem. Human beings should understand that they are not only the center of the history of the world. Anthropocentric thinking is the center of human sin.

We must respond to a 'thou-ness' in all beings. This is not romanticism or an anthropomorphic animism that sees "dryads in trees," although there is truth in the animist view. The spirit in plants or animals is not anthropomorphic but biomorphic to its own forms of life. We respond not just as "I to it," but as "I to thou," to the spirit, the life energy that lies in every being in its own form of existence. The "brotherhood of man" needs to be widened to embrace not only women but also the whole community of life.⁵⁸

If we continue to let "our behavior be dominated by separation, antagonism, and greed, we shall destroy the delicate balances of our planetary environment. If the environment were once destroyed, there would be no more life for human beings."⁵⁹ If human beings do not quit their reckless acts such as the consumer ideals, the reckless technology development, the continuous use of chemical material and nuclear energy, the destruction of thick forests, etc. human beings shall see the end of the earth. We should reform our spirituality from anthropocentrism to God-centered, natural centered, and universe-centered. Also we should reform our consumer oriented life style. This is a new

⁵⁸ Ruether, 87.

⁵⁹ Barbara Ward, Only One Earth (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 45.

spirituality that needs to be in the new coming age. All Christians should take a responsibility for the stewardship of the earth.

On this point, Korean immigrant Christians need to raise a social consciousness for caring for the ecological crises. Even though they have urgent survival issues economically and politically in this multi-cultural society, as immigrants, Korean immigrants must work hard to reform their consumer oriented life style. Taking care of the ecological crises is an urgent and important thing for life in the twenty-first century. If the ratio of the current air and water pollution is kept for a few decades more, we will see many serious eschatological phenomena in our century. All human beings, both Christians and non-Christians, should realize that it is the time to restore the earth from the pollution.

Our Experiential Dimension

Since the 1960s, emerging liberation theology, all human beings' experiences became a very important source for Christian theology in the theological world. Practically, before the 1960s, the traditional Christian theology was led by exclusively western theologians. There was no room for other people of color in the theological world. However, opening of the inter-religious dialogue age, western people began to recognize other religious value and all human beings' intrinsic value.

Human experience is the starting and the ending point of the hermeneutic circle. Codified tradition both reaches back to roots in experience and is constantly renewed or discarded through the test of experience. "Experience" includes experience of the divine, experience of oneself, and experience of the community and the world, in and interacting dialectic.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Ruether, 12.

All human beings have unique living experiences which are individual and communal. The experiences accumulated over a long time help us to shape a world view of our life. The world view is a barometer of our decision making. Although God fully reveals Him/Herself, we human beings cannot help but accept the God's revelation within the light of the limitation of our own experience. Therefore, all human experiences have their unparalleled values. These experiences are our common resource for making a better world.

A religious tradition remains vital so long as its revelatory pattern can be reproduced generation after generation and continues to speak to individuals in the community and provide for them the redemptive meaning of individual and collective experience. Such has been the Exodus-Passover pattern for Jews and the death-resurrection paradigm of personal conversion for Christians. The circle from experience to experience, mediated through instruments of tradition, is thus completed when the contemporary community appropriates the foundational paradigm as the continuing story of its own redemption in relation to God, self, and one another.⁶¹

According to Eliade, all human beings are religious. He says "a drastically non-religious experience of the whole of life is seldom found in the pure state, even in the most secularized societies."⁶² Even Marx "takes over and continues one of the great eschatological myths of the Asiatic-Mediterranean world."⁶³ An important thing that we should be concerned is with that every human being's experiences of hierophany are

⁶¹ Ibid., 16.

⁶² Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 186.

⁶³ Ibid., 206.

different. There is neither a superior experience nor an inferior experience. Every one is valuable. According to Rudolf Otto, religious experience is non-rational and irrational. "The non-rational element in religion is alive in the heart of the religious experience."⁶⁴ This assumption is very important in the study of science of religion in the modern pluralistic and scientific society. The reason is that all human beings have their own religious experience. We can not account for the value of another unique experience in terms of our own perspective. All religious experiences have their own unique value. If we believe in God the creator, we can accept other people as our brothers and sisters. We need to make room for other people in our hearts. I believe, if we open our hearts and talk with each other, we can find that all human beings are children of God.

Every human being differently experiences theophanies according to their own cultural and historical background. Black Elk is a good example. When he was nine years old, Black Elk experienced the theophanies.⁶⁵ An important thing is that his religious experience is closely related to Indian culture and life. When he was sick, Black Elk caught a great vision that comes from his six grandfathers. After this experience, for him, space and time was not homogeneous and neutral. Space and time were sacred things for him. At this point, we can say that every one has his/her own religious experience. Even if one God reveals Him/Herself to human being, the God experience is limited by human experience. If someone experiences a transcendent religious experience, the explanation

⁶⁴ Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 3.

⁶⁵ Black Elk, Black Elk Speaks, as told through John G. Neihardt (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 20.

of the experience must be translated by human language that is limited by his/her own cultural and ethnic consensus. If the experience is not translated by our language, we can not realize what the experience is. For example, there is an ultra-sound in this world. However, we cannot hear the ultra-sound with our naked ears. Human beings can hear the sound that exists within a cycle limited by the human organ. We human beings have our own perceptual channel according to our cultural and historical backgrounds. Therefore, there is no inferior or superior religious experience in human life. In other words, every religious experience has its own unique value. Black Elk's experience is valuable for his life as a native American. I think every religious experience is just a different human response to God's revelation.

However, in the analysis of our past history, unfortunately, when we see the process of the spreading of the Gospel, the other's experiences have been completely disregarded by the European missionaries under the name of Christianity. My personal view is that, up until now, we might say that the spreading of the Gospel by European missionaries is not spreading the Gospel in terms of Jesus' love, but a cultural dominance.

According to Philip Sheldrake, the traditional Christian spirituality was developed by the elite from the early period of Christianity. He points out another important thing. It is about the culture clashes. If one culture clashes with another culture, spiritual colonialism comes out of the cultural clashes. When it happened "one predominant culture was gradually assumed to be inherently superior and other spiritual cultures to be

more primitive.”⁶⁶ As a result, a local religious symbol was rejected by dominant people as well as their spirituality. “Marxism teaches that all religion is an instrument the ruling class uses to justify its own power and to pacify the oppressed. This makes religion not the means of redemption but the means of enslavement. The very nature of religious knowledge is seen as promoting alienation rather than integration of the human person.”⁶⁷

As Koreans, we have those kinds of experiences. We had those experiences under the dictatorship of Japan. Nowadays, we have those experiences through the cultural clashes between the Western scientific culture and the eastern Asian culture. When Christianity was propagated in the Korean society by Western missionaries, the missionaries easily disregarded the Korean living story that had been formed through the long history of about 4,500 years. A true mission is not to subordinate other people by our own religious perspective. A true mission is to live with the people, to serve the people and to liberate the oppressed like Jesus Christ. We can find a true mission in the sacrificial life for other people. Sometimes, many Christians confuse the Christian mission with civilization. When we see Jesus in the Gospel, Jesus himself does not want to civilize people. Instead of that, Jesus restores the human dignity of the sinner and outcast of that society as children of God. Civilization is a very important thing. However, the most important thing of Christian mission is to help the people in order to find their human dignity by discovering themselves as children of God.

⁶⁶ Sheldrake, 68.

⁶⁷ Ruether, 68.

In a pluralistic society, we cannot speak about Christian spirituality without concern for other's spiritual experience. For example, for black people, their real life experience is a primary source for forming their spirituality. For the black people who have innumerable severe life experiences as slaves, Western traditional theology and spirituality cannot be applied as a norm of their faith. For black people, their spirituality cannot be separated from their suffering life experiences. In the light of the eyes of black oppressed people, liberation from the unjust social structure is the most important theme of their theological work. According to James H. Evans, Jr., "God's liberation of the Israelites under the leadership of Moses and God's liberation of the oppressed through the death and resurrection of Jesus are the cornerstones of Christian faith."⁶⁸

He points out the multi-dimension of liberation such as physical, spiritual, and cultural dimensions.

Physical liberation refers to the innate desire of all human beings to enjoy freedom of movement and association and the rights of self determination. The prominence of the emphysical liberation in African-American social thought is understandable in light of the fact that physical bondage was the distinguishing aspect of the existence of Africans in the New World for four hundred years and that complete freedom has not yet come to African-Americans as a whole. Spiritual liberation means walking in the newness of life, no longer fettered by self-doubt and flagging confidence. It means freedom from the sin of slave as well as the slave of sin. Cultural liberation refers to freedom from negative self-image, symbols, and stereotypes. People of African descent have been historically victimized by a color symbolism. The association of blackness with sin in the Christian context has played a major role in the cultural oppression of people of color.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Evans, 16.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 16-17.

For black people, liberation is not a theological topic apart from any relationship with their historical suffering reality. Liberation is a historical reality and divine truth for the blacks who struggle with their freedom. At this point, we can observe the fact that Christian spirituality should concern physical, spiritual, and cultural dimensions. Like black people, "the spirituality being born in Latin America is the spirituality of the church of the poor."⁷⁰ In the human experiential dimension, at the root of every spirituality there is a particular experience that is had by concrete persons living at a particular time. "The experience is both proper to them and yet communicable to others. All people should drink from their own well."⁷¹

Koreans have a long suffering history. Through this long history, like Israelites, Koreans have suffered a lot from reasons such as poverty, diseases, many intrusions of surrounding super nations, and natural disasters. Nevertheless, they have overcome all of the crises and they have kept the unity in their own ethnicity. Now Koreans have a chance to share their suffering experiences with other suffering people and have a chance to encourage them in this multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. If Koreans take their suffering history as a sacred history of how God has led them, like Israelites, Korean immigrants will be able to contribute themselves greatly to the suffering people in this multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. I strongly believe that Korean immigrants' suffering experiences can be very useful resources for God's mission. We need to develop our sacred Christian spirituality from our suffering experiences.

⁷⁰ Gutierrez, We Drink from Our Own Wells, 29.

⁷¹ Ibid., 37.

CHAPTER 4

Lenten Spirituality

Spirituality discipline can be nurtured in a variety of ways. One of the wonderful ways of spiritual discipline is to use seasonal events according to the church calendar such as Advent, Christmas Season, The Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. Seasonal events can provide a “rhythmic pattern to the participating people in communities of all kinds.”¹ If we can clearly articulate those events, we can cultivate our spirituality more effectively through the events. One of the best seasons of spiritual discipline is Lent because Lent has been a period of intensive activity in our churches and Lent symbolically includes all spiritual journeys of Jesus Christ. The center of Christian spirituality is to follow Jesus’ foot steps. Therefore Lent is the best season for imitating Jesus Christ’s foot steps.

“The Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. The First Sunday describes Jesus’ temptation by Satan; and the Sixth Sunday (Passion/Palm Sunday), Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his subsequent passion and death.”² Therefore, we can think that the forty days of Lent are including all spiritual journeys of Jesus Christ. Following Jesus’ foot steps is the main goal of our Christian spiritual nurture and discipline. Through Lent, as Christians, we can deeply meditate on our beings as disciples of Jesus Christ. Lent is

¹ Chares R. Foster, Educating Congregations (Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1994). 43.

² United Methodist Church (U.S.), The United Methodist Book of Worship. 320.

composed of six weeks. When we consider that our Christian lives are composed of weekly based cycles, Lent is the best season for us to concentrate on our spiritual discipline for six weeks. Christians have seen Lent as a period for self-discipline and self-denial, for heart-searching and repentance. Through Lent, we Christians can see what we really are, what we should be, and what God does really want us in this postmodern world. Therefore, Lent is the best season for reawakening, nurturing and discipline of our Christian spirituality.

The Origin of Lent

Lent as we know it today is the product of a long and complex historical development. Lent was not developed from the early Apostolic age. Until the middle of the second century, the day of fasting was very short before the annual celebration of Pascha. The fast was conducted differently in different places and different times. Some of the fathers, such as St. Leo, the historian Socrates, and St. Jerome, as early as the fifth century insisted that forty days' fast was an Apostolic institution.³ However, most of modern scholars reject their view because there is no proof that the forty days' fast was an Apostolic institution in church history. According to existing materials, there was no concrete evidence that the forty days' fast was practiced in the Apostolic age. The practice of the forty days' fast was gradually developed after the third century. In the early age of the church history, the fast days did not exceed two or three days before Easter. There was a considerable diversity of practice regarding the fast before Easter.

³ Herbert Thurston, "Lent," The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 9, ed. Charles G. Herbermann (New York: Robert Appleton, 1910), 152.

The length of the preparation for Easter varied from place to place and from time to time. The passage of primary importance is one quoted by Eusebius. According to his letter, "the controversy is not only about the day but also about the actual character of the fast; for some think that they ought to fast one day, others two, others even more; some count their day as forty hours, day and night. And such variations in the observance did not begin in our own time but much earlier, in the days of our predecessors (cit. in Eusebius, Hist. Eccle. 5, 24, 12.)."⁴ Another reference is the work of Tertullian. There is also no evidence about forty days' fast in the work of Tertullian even though "he wrote an entire treatise, 'De Jejuniis,' and often touched upon the subject elsewhere, that he was acquainted with any period of forty days consecrated to more or less continuous fasting ('De Jejunio,' ii and xiv)."⁵ The other historical resource is "the Canons of Hippolytus (? early third century)."⁶ According to the book, "the two days preceding Easter were given to fasting."⁷ As a result, we can conclude that fast days did not exceed two or three days until the second century.

In the third century, there is evidence that the fast days were extended for six days. We can see the evidence in the Didascalia Apostolorum (about the year 250).

⁴ Alexander Schmemmann, Great Lent (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1963), 135.

⁵ Thurston, 152.

⁶ Edgar S. Brown, Jr., "Seasons of Worship," in The Encyclopedia of The Lutheran Church, vol. 3, ed. Julius Bodensieck (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), 2518.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2518.

According to that book, “Therefore you shall fast in the days of Pascha from . . . the second day of the week; and you shall sustain yourselves with bread and salt and water only, at the ninth hour, until the fifth day of the week. But on Friday and on the Sabbath fast wholly, and taste nothing.”⁸ This period of fasting was related to the penitential period of preparation of the catechumens who were to receive Baptism and Holy Communion at Easter. The first mention of the forty days was found in the fifth canon of the Council of Nicea. Before the Council of Nicea, there were a long history of development of Lent.

Before the establishment of the forty days period, Rome had a liturgical preparation of three weeks preceding Easter. Later the time was extended to six weeks, but because Sundays were excluded this provided only 36 days, which as Gregory noted, permitted Christians to offer a ‘tithe’ of the year to the Lord in fasting and penitence. In the East the fast also lasted for 36 days but this computation was derived by keeping seven weeks (Saturday and Sundays excluded except Holy Saturday). Only at Jerusalem, and this from the fourth century, did the fast measure exactly forty days: eight weeks of five days each.⁹

Unfortunately, there is no clear resource showing how the early pre-paschal fast of six days was developed into the forty days. It is a fact that the first mention of forty days’ fast occurs in the fifth canon of the Council of Nicea (AD 325).¹⁰ It is clear that the pattern of the forty days symbolically relates to the Israelites’ wanderings, Moses’ fast on Mount Sinai (Deut. 9:9), Elijah’s fasting journey to the Mount of God (1 Kings 19:8), and

⁸ Quoted in A. Allan McArthur, The Evolution of the Christian Year (London: SCM Press, 1953), 115.

⁹ Edgar S. Brown, 2518.

¹⁰ Thurston, 152.

our Lord's fast. However, according to the church historians Socrates and Sozomen, until late in the fifth century, the practice of the fast was still very diverse in different places. Socrates wrote that "the fast before Easter is observed differently in different places. In Rome one fasts for three weeks, in Illyricum, Greece, and Alexandria one keeps the fast for six weeks before Pascha and it is called Forty Days; still others begin to fast seven weeks before the feast (Socrates, His. Eccles. 5, 22)."¹¹ Sozomen also repeated the same information.

The so-called Forty Days before Pascha when people fast - some begin at 6 weeks, namely Illyricum and the Christians living in the West, Libya, Egypt and Palestine, but others at 7 weeks, as the inhabitants of Constantinople and its reign During these six weeks or more some fast for three weeks with interruptions, some for three solid weeks before the feast, and some-e.g. the Montanists-only for two weeks (Somen, His. Eccl., 7, 19).¹²

Through this historical record, although forty days' fast was mentioned in the fifth canon of the Council of Nicea, we can see that the forty days' fast was conducted in various ways in different places until the last of the fifth century. In Jerusalem, "Lent included Holy Week but excluded Saturdays and Sundays: Lent thus consisted of eight weeks, each including five days of fasting which gave exactly forty days of strict fast."¹³ According to St. John Chrysostom and Epiphanius, the same practices were conducted in Antioch and Cyprus. On the other hand, "in Constantinople, the Forty Days included Saturdays and Sundays but excluded not only Holy Week but also Lazarus Saturday and

¹¹ Schmemmann, 136.

¹² Ibid., 136.

¹³ Ibid., 136.

Palm Sunday. In the West and in Egypt, Lent included both Holy Week and the weekly Eucharist days which resulted in an even shorter fast.”¹⁴ The development of Lent has a long history of its organization in time and its worship. Through the process of development of Lent, “pre-baptismal and catechetical character of Lent was replaced by a purely ‘penitential’ one.”¹⁵ Nowadays, Christians think that Lent is one of the best seasons for self-discipline and self-denial, for heart-searching and repentance as Christians.

A New Understanding of the Traditional Spiritual Discipline in Lent in Light
of the Modern View

The season of Lent is about discipleship-- following the way of Jesus. Symbolically, Lent includes all of the spiritual journeys of Jesus Christ. Jesus started His mission with the fast of forty days in the desert and He fulfilled His mission through the resurrection. Although Lent originally had developed as a time for preparation for the celebration of Easter by fasting and prayer, nowadays, Lent is the time for meditation on all spiritual journeys of Jesus Christ. All Christians confess that Jesus Christ is our Lord. Therefore, we Christians must meditate on Jesus’ sayings, teachings, His Passion, His death and resurrection. The essence of the Christian spirituality is to follow in Jesus’ footsteps. Through Lent, we can clearly check our spiritual life in the light of our Lord’s mode of life. Traditionally, Lenten spiritual disciplines have included repentance, fasting, prayer and reading, almsgiving etc. These spiritual practices are still very valuable in

¹⁴ Ibid., 136.

¹⁵ Ibid., 137.

modern material society. We need to recover the true meaning of those spiritual practices in terms of our modern pluralistic worldview.

Repentance

Lent is the time in the Church Year that has been particularly associated with repentance and renewal of spiritual life. Our Lord Jesus Christ started his public life with taking baptism which symbolically means repentance. He is not a sinner. However, Christ as a representative of all human beings, shows us the way of salvation through his symbolical action. Repentance is the first gate for human salvation. The traditional understanding of repentance is to confess our sin to God. In spiritual discipline, traditionally, one of the important considerations is sin. One of the main goals of spiritual discipline is to reconcile with God and our neighbor. In order to do that, we must confess and repent our sin and receive God's forgiveness and grace.

However the problem is that our traditional understanding of sin is unilaterally focused on the oppressor. There is no room for the salvation of the oppressed in the traditional understanding of sin and salvation. Traditional understanding of sin has been focused on individualistic views of sin for the oppressor's and sinner's salvation. There is no concern about the oppressed's suffering and crying. According to Reinhold Niebuhr, "Sin is primarily pride and secondarily sensuality. He subdivides pride into the pride of power, intellectual pride, moral pride, and spiritual pride. Similarly, sensuality is comprised of lust, gluttony, and drunkenness. To him, all these sins are based on self-love."¹⁶ For Karl Barth, the fundamental sin is the rebellion against God's grace that is

revealed in Jesus Christ. "Sin takes three forms: pride, sloth, and falsehood. Pride is 'exalting oneself' to be like God: 'evil action.' Sloth means to fall into the morass of stupidity, inhumanity, and anxiety: 'evil inaction.'"¹⁷ For Paul Tillich, sin is estrangement from God. "The marks of estrangement are threefold: unbelief, hubris, and concupiscence. These sins are derived from self-centeredness."¹⁸ For Rudolf Bultmann, the root of "sin is existence without faith. It manifests itself in ingratitude, unbelief, slavery, surrender to the world, and bondage to death."¹⁹ All of them focus on individual rebellion against God's will. All of them emphasized "the magnitude of sin to such a degree that only through repenting of sin to God would the sinner be saved by God's grace. By listening and responding to the assuring Word of God, the sinner's sin is forgiven and his or her guilt is removed. These concepts of sin and salvation are of limited utility in addressing the problems of human evil and suffering."²⁰ On the other hand, political theologians such as "Dorothee Soelle, Johannes Metz, Jurgen Moltmann, and Frederick Herzog, stress the social dimension of sin."²¹ According to them, sin is not simply a private matter but essentially political and a social matter. They focus on social evil.

¹⁶ Park, 70.

¹⁷ Ibid., 71.

¹⁸ Ibid., 71.

¹⁹ Ibid., 71.

²⁰ Ibid., 69.

²¹ Ibid., 71.

In this point, we need to ask to ourselves, what is repentance? A true repentance is not just to confess our wrong doing and take off our guilt feeling but totally to reform our sinful life and to find ourselves as God's children in relationship with God and our neighbor as well as all of the other creatures. It comes from a real awakening about God, our self-identity, our neighbors and all the natural world. True repentance does not relate to any kind of outward form. True repentance is not a matter of dramatic public acts but a matter of the whole will and self of the person in relationship with God and our neighbor that must include other human beings as well as the other creatures. We should begin to rend our rigid hearts, not our garments. It is to reform from our self-centered life to God-centered life, our neighbor-centered life and creation-centered life. Through true repentance, we can restore our self-identity as children of God and friends of the other creatures.

Therefore, repentance has personal and communal dimensions. In the personal dimension, it is to restore the relationship between a sinner and God. Repentance is to understand that we human beings cannot live for ourselves alone without God and our neighbor. It is to put God first in our lives. We human beings must repent of our sin as rebellion against God. However it is not enough. In the communal dimension, we must repent of our sin as a rebellion against all of God's creatures. When we repent of our sin, we must listen to the victim's cry and suffering. If victims are still crying and suffering as the result of our wrong doing, what does it mean to repent of our sin? Isn't it just for the sinner's salvation? The traditional understanding of sin is not concerned with the oppressed's and victim's suffering. While victims are crying and suffering from our wrong doing, we cannot receive God's forgiveness. For example, while nature is dying

because of anthropocentric industrialism, human beings cannot pray for our own salvation. In this age of ecological crises, our repentance must include our concrete strategy to reform our consumer oriented life style.

In addition to that, in the pluralistic society, we cannot think about our repentance without relationship with other ethnic groups. We should ask ourselves: Who are our neighbors? Our neighbor is not just our own ethnic group and only human beings. Our neighbors are all God's creatures who are living in this world because God creates all of the creatures as well as all human beings. In this perspective, sin does not take care of other creatures for only our own happiness. There must be a concrete strategy to take care of the victim's suffering in our confession of our sin. Therefore we must understand a true repentance is to restore the relationship between a sinner and his/her neighbors as well as the natural world. "Lent is a time of paying attention, being alert to the stirrings of the Spirit, hearing the cry of the poor, being respectful of our own inner voices."²² In the pluralistic and ecological crisis age, we should include other ethnic groups, other creatures, and our mother earth in the category of our neighbor. As a result, we should understand that a true repentance is to reform our self-centered, ethnocentric, anthropocentric, and modern consumer- oriented life style.

Fasting

Fasting is one of the main spiritual disciplines in Lent from the early Church. For example, the historian Socrates tells the practice of the fast in the fifth century.

²² Robert F. Morneau, Ashes to Easter (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1996).
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Some abstains from every sort of creatures eat of fish only. Others eat birds as well as fish, because, according to the Mosaic account of the Creation, they too sprang from the water; others abstain from fruit covered with a hard shell and from eggs. Some eat dry bread only, others not even that; others again when they have fasted to the ninth hour (three o'clock) partake of various kinds of food (His. Eccle., V, 22).²³

The usual rule on fasting days was to take one meal a day that was only in the evening. Especially, meat and wine were entirely forbidden. "Bede tells us of Bishop Cedda, that during Lent he took only one meal a day consisting of 'a little bread, a hen's egg, and a little milk mixed with water' (Hist. Eccl., III, xxiii), while Theodulphus of Orleans in the eighth century regarded abstinence from eggs, cheese, and fish as a mark of exceptional virtue."²⁴

Fasting is also one of the good spiritual disciplines which is based on the Bible. Jesus began his ministry with a fast of forty days in the desert. Jesus took a fast of forty days in the desert after his baptism by John in the Jordan. The spirit immediately drove him out into the desert. And he remained in the desert for forty days, and Satan tried to tempt him there; and he was among the wild animals; but the angels waited on him (Mark 1:12-13). "Jesus watched with God; he suffered the pains of hunger; he underwent temptation. For nearly six weeks he cut himself off from human contacts and human pleasures, and fixed his attention on God and on God's will for his life. Then he came back into the world, fully prepared to begin his work of redemption."²⁵ In the Old

²³ Thurston, 153.

²⁴ Ibid., 153.

Testament, we can find the archetypes that forty days' fasting is spiritual discipline for equipping us to carry out God's redemptive works. In the case of Moses, after fasting for forty days, he received the two tables of the ten commandments written by God.

The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mount and stay here; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and the commandments which I have written, that you may teach them (12). To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. (Exod. 24:12; 17-18)

In case of Elijah, after fasting for forty days, he had experienced a great manifestation of God, which sent him back, encouraged and enlightened, to his prophetic calling.

The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said. "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by the food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mount of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him. "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:7-9)

Forty days and forty nights came to symbolize the meaning of fasting as a preparation for God's redemptive work. In the Bible, also, the number of forty has a very important symbolical meaning for spiritual discipline. Moses' life can be divided by forty years for carrying out God's will. In crucial situations, Moses often had fasted for forty days (Exod. 24:18, 34:21; Deut. 9:18, 25). Israelites wandered forty years in the wilderness. Jesus had fasted forty days in the desert. St. Luke counted forty days between

²⁵ Eugene R. Fairweather, The Meaning and Message of Lent (New York: Harper and Bros., 1962), 124.

Christ's resurrection from death and his ascension into heavenly glory. Consequently, forty days' fasting is clearly marked as an act of preparation for God's redemptive works.

In this traditional background, in the early church, "it was widely held that fasting was an especially effective way of preparing for a sacred action, and quite early in Christian history the custom grew out of keeping a fast in preparation for the Holy Communion."²⁶ Fasting is prayer. Fasting helps us to concentrate and intensify our prayer. The Christian's supreme aim in fasting is to foster prayerful concentration on the ultimate meaning of Christian life, and a fast that fails to lead to prayer is not a Christian fast at all.

Especially, in the modern consumer-oriented culture, fasting is one of the wonderful spiritual disciplines. We are addicted to self-centered materialism and consumerism. We are greedy to take material things more and more. From early childhood, the modern people have been oriented by worshipping of materialism. In this situation, through fasting, we can clearly understand what God asks of us and what God really wants for us. And we can check ourselves as disciples of Jesus. "Lent is a good time to do inventory. What are the gifts God has given us? How well have we cultivated and shared the Lord's blessings? What do we still need to deepen our faith and become more mature disciples? Jesus invites us to approach God with confidence and trust."²⁷ If we are true disciples of Jesus Christ, we need to practice self-denial and self-sacrifice for others like Jesus Christ did. We must repent of how we spend too much the natural

²⁶ Ibid., 121.

²⁷ Morneau, 30.

resources just for our own interest. In the third world country, many people are suffering from hunger and starvation. And our mother earth is dying from our anthropocentric exploitation. "Fasting can be done for a variety of reasons: to gain liberation from some addiction or vice; to be counterculture, witnessing a different set of values to the dominant culture; to extend compassion in solidarity with those who suffer. Jesus comments of the proper seasons to fast and to feast. Our fasting during Lent helps us to experience the plight of our needy sisters and brothers."²⁸ Through the practice of fasting, we can have a time to meditate who we really are. Lent is the time to reaffirm our mission and ministry as disciples of Jesus Christ. We should believe that we are calling for stewardship for all God's creatures.

All Christians, in particular, are called upon to use their material resources and social and political influence to eradicate the kinds of social injustice that perpetuate dehumanizing, unchosen forms of poverty. Since any concerted or sustained action on behalf of the poor will almost certainly be personally costly, it is essential that the Church equip people for this task, and there is no better way to do this than to teach them the meaning of poverty of spirit.²⁹

Fasting is a discipline to practice to identify ourselves with the poor. When we embrace simplicity and poverty, graces of inestimable value, our spiritual journey through simple life will be immensely enriched. Then we shall become true disciples of Jesus Christ. We should take off our garments that are of the consumer-oriented culture

²⁸ Ibid., 17.

²⁹ Ronald M. Mrozinski and Gabriel O'Donnell, "Poverty and Prayer," in Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church, eds. Robin Maas and Gabriel O'Donnell (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 105.

and society. Lent is a time of examination, individual and collective; it is a time to repent our self-centered and anthropocentric consumerism. Jesus gave his life for not only humanity but all of creation; for in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, nature itself, fallen with Adam, is renewed and redeemed. In our modern society, “whole political and economic systems seem to militate against harmony and peace with the created order. Greed and self-sufficiency create chasms between people and often make the environment a victim of exploitation; or we mistake possession for power and hold creation in bondage, unwittingly and without malice.”³⁰

The real meaning of fasting is to free ourselves from our greed and our self-centered life and to restore the order of creation that God wants. Through meditation on fasting, we can realize that we human beings are one part of the natural world. Through practice of fasting, we can clearly understand who we really are and what God has done for us.

Prayer

Prayer can not be separated from fasting. Without prayer, fasting is meaningless. Practically all of the spiritual disciplines such as repentance, fasting, meditation, reading, almsgiving, are deeply related with prayer. Prayer is the most central of all kinds of spiritual disciplines. Lent is the time to pray. The forty days of fasting of Jesus Christ was the time to pray for preparation of God’s redemptive work. Jesus cut himself off from human contacts and human pleasures, and fixed his attention only on God’s will for his

³⁰ Ibid., 103.

life. While on his mission, of forty days and forty nights in the desert, Jesus never quit praying. All his power came from prayer (Mark 9:29). Jesus began his mission with prayer (Mark 1:12-13) and finished his mission with prayer (Mark 14:32-42). Prayer was the center of Jesus' life. As I already mentioned above, because Lent symbolically includes all of the spiritual journeys of Jesus Christ, we can say that prayer is the most central activity in Lent.

Prayer is the communion with God the creator. While we are praying, God reveals Him/Herself to us. Prayer includes the process of confession, thanksgiving, praising, asking, listening, and obedience. "Real prayer is life creating and life changing. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives."³¹ In prayer time, we are immersing in God's presence. At that time, we have to ask rightly of God, have to listen rightly, and have to respond rightly. Through this process, we become involved in transforming ourselves according to God's will. Participating in prayer, we can start our spiritual journey as children of God. Prayer is to participate of the process of transforming ourselves from our self-centered life to God-centered life. Therefore, prayer must be the most precious daily work in our life.

Prayer must be an everyday event. Daily prayer becomes a life-giving encounter with God as essential as eating and sleeping. When we do come to pray, how long should we spend? It is generally agreed that a half hour of prayer each day is a good basis for spiritual growth. This is time for personal, private prayer aside from any public liturgical or devotional

33. ³¹ Richard J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline (New York: Harper Collins, 1978).

activities. Ideally, it should be in one block of time, not two fifteen-minute periods.³²

In order to pray, we must to set a specific time and place when nothing can interrupt our prayer. Prayer time and place should be the sacred time and place of our life. Prayer is not theory but praxis. Prayer is the most precious work that needs a lot of our energy and attention. There are many great characters in the Bible who were great men and women of prayer. Without prayer, nobody can be a great spiritual human being. Prayer can be learned by prayer itself. Nobody can teach real prayer. It can be learned only by oneself through doing it.

There are many types of prayer in the Bible such as silent prayer, *Tongsung* prayer, over night prayer, fasting prayer, daily routine prayer, group prayer, individual prayer, contemplative prayer, ritual prayer etc. We can take any types of prayer that is familial with us. The attitude and heart of the person who prays is more important than the types of prayer.

Reading

The main purpose of spiritual discipline is the total transformation of our whole life and thought. Our thought produces our acts. Our acts produce our habits. Our habits produce our destination. In other words, what we think decides who we are. The question of who we are is defined by what we think. If we transform our thought, we can transform our destination. One of very effective ways of transforming our thought is

³² Gabriel O'Donnell, "Getting Ready to Pray: The Practice of Spiritual Disciplines," in Spiritual Traditions For The Contemporary Church, eds. Robin Maas and Gabriel O'Donnell (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 134.

reading of the sacred books. Reading is a very powerful tool for transforming our life. From the early church, one of the very important spiritual disciplines is reading sacred books. Traditionally, it has been called *lectio divina*.³³

The primary source of what is read in *lectio divina* is Sacred Scripture. Secondly, *lectio* refers to the reading of other texts recognized as holy by the Christian community, particularly the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Although Scripture and patristic literature continue to be the primary sources used in the practice of *lectio divina*, in later and especially, in contemporary times, *lectio divina* has been expanded to include the reading of all spiritual books.³⁴

St. Benedict was a good example in the sixth century. In his Rule, for monks, "Specified books were to be given out to all the brethren at the beginning of Lent. He made it plain, for browsing or skimming, but for serious, continuous reading."³⁵ One very important rule for *lectio divina* is not to allow random reading. If one chooses a text, he/she should begin at the beginning, and continue to the end, picking up each day where he/she left off the previous day. In the early church, *lectio* (reading) was a metaphor like eating. "A morsel of food is taken, chewed over, broken apart, and swallowed. *Lectio divina* is like that: A phrase from the Bible is first tasted, then savored and chewed- or repeated over and over- and finally swallowed or consumed."³⁶

³³ Gabriel O'Donnell, "Reading for Holiness," in Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church, 45. "The Latin phrase, *lectio divina*, originated in the fourth and fifth centuries and was associated in its beginnings with the spirituality of the monastic life. Literally, it means 'divine reading' or 'sacred reading.'"

³⁴ Ibid., 45.

³⁵ Fairweather, 9.

To settle down to six weeks of hard reading and thinking about our Christian life would make our life very different. Our Lenten reading may suitably touch on any aspect of Christian doctrine and practice. Especially, we may strongly stress reading the Holy Scriptures. For modern Christians, one of the big problems is that they don't read the Bible. They say that the Bible is the word of God. However, they don't read the Bible every day. Reading the Bible every day is a very important part of our spiritual discipline. If we want to grow spiritually, we must read the Bible and meditate on it every day. Lent is the best chance to discipline ourselves to read the Bible. On the other hand, during Lent, we can read other religious books related to current critical issues such as, ecological crisis, feminist issues, racial issues, etc. Lent is the time to give of ourselves and to look at ourselves in an other's perspective. Through reading the book, we can understand more about other's experiences and current issues that we Christians should know.

Almsgiving

Almsgiving is one of the important traditional spiritual disciplines from the early church in Lent. Almsgiving has been accompanied by prayer from the early church. We can see a good example in Acts 10:1-4.

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel

³⁶ Gabriel O' Donnell, "Reading for Holiness," 46.

answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.

There is another good example in the Old Testament, Isaiah 58:1-7. In this case, we can see the fact that almsgiving should be accompanied by fasting. We can see what is real fasting in Isaiah chapter 58: 1-7.

Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the house of Jacob their sins. For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them. “Why have we fasted,” they say, “and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?” Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

In this scripture, we can see that fasting is related with almsgiving and taking care of the poor. Real fasting is related to social justice that is to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke. It is Christian responsibility that should be reflected on those who are hungry, naked, homeless, sick, and imprisoned (Matt. 25:35-39). In this point, we can see the fact that the biblical teaching of almsgiving is closely related to a matter of social justice. Like sayings of Gustavo Guitierrez, we Christians must reflect on the matter of almsgiving in light of “the world hunger, the poverty, malnutrition, endemic diseases, violence, political

repression, and social marginalization that racks the world of the poor.”³⁷ Therefore, almsgiving is not only purely an individual thing but also social, communal, economic, political issues in our modern society.

Another important thing is that almsgiving is not simply to support material things for the poor but to identity with the poor. Real almsgiving is to restore human dignity of the poor who are created in the image of God. According to Thomas Aquinas,

Every human being as a ‘rational animal’ is created in the image of God and capable of eternal fellowship with God. Every person is therefore a neighbor; no one is excluded from the ‘universe of moral obligation’ on any grounds. Therefore, mercy, as an expression of charity, involves not simply material support for the poor but more importantly the ‘love of friendship.’ Mercy includes a giving of self that involves affective union and communication.³⁸

Real almsgiving is to be friends with the poor. If we think that they are merely our beneficiary, it is not real almsgiving. Real almsgiving is to respect their human dignity as children of God and our brothers and sisters. We should be concerned that the poor should not lose their self-esteem through receiving charity. Real almsgiving is to help the poor to be able to stand by themselves in the presence of God and all human beings. In this regard, we can understand that almsgiving is a spiritual discipline to restore our human dignity and to embrace all human beings as our brothers and sisters. We Christians have to “enter the world of the other in order to come to a felt awareness of the suffering of the poor, a real sense of the profound injustice of the present social order.

³⁷ Stephen J. Pope, “Christian Love for the Poor: Almsgiving and the Preferential Option,” Horizons 21 (Fall 1994): 296.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 291.

and a radical commitment to reconstructing the social order.”³⁹ In my personal opinion, Lent is the best season to reform our old paradigm about our Christian charity that focuses on our self-righteousness and self-centeredness. Lent is the best season for we Christians to train ourselves as disciples of Jesus Christ spiritually.

³⁹ Ibid., 307.

CHAPTER 5

Spiritual Discipline in Lent

This chapter deals with a practical program to nurture spiritual growth during Lent for Korean Christians in Southern California. This is a six-week adventure. This six week course involves meeting once a week in a group to reflect on spirituality. It also entails each individual's commitment to practice certain disciplines throughout the week. The disciplines that they are to practice include Bible study, sharing time, reading, prayer, fasting, daily meditation, and making a spiritual journal.

Each weekly meeting will include praise, prayer, meditation, sharing on weekly spiritual exercises, Bible lesson, and closing prayer. In addition, each weekly meeting will have a specific theme. The themes are "To Be a Disciple," "Encountering God," "Developing New Relationships with Our Neighbors," "The Mission of the Church," and "What is Christian Spirituality." On the last day, the participants will have a retreat to wrap up the whole course.

The Goals for the Overall Series

This project is intended to be sensitive to the issues of being Christian in the postmodern world, the issues of multiculturalism, racial inclusiveness in a pluralistic society, and the ecological crisis. In the postmodern world, in order to be true Christians, we should confirm our self-identities as disciples of Jesus. In order to do that, we should understand first what Christian spirituality really is. In the case of Koreans, they usually think that Christian spirituality is related to only our individual inner life. Now we Koreans should know that Christian spirituality cannot be separated from all of the dimensions of our daily lives. Therefore, in this course, the participants will confirm what

kind of spirituality they must have in the postmodern world. Through this course, they hopefully will extend their understanding of Christian spirituality and they will take spiritual exercises in their daily lives in terms of the postmodern world view.

The Participants

This program is designed for the Korean immigrant young adults who are from thirty to forty years of age in a parish setting, the Wilshire United Methodist Church. They can read and speak in English and they actively work and are involved in this multi-cultural society. They will be leaders for the Korean immigrant church very soon.

The Overall Guidance of the Six Weeks

The participants need to commit themselves to practice the following things during the week and need to gather together for weekly meetings. In the first week, they will agree to follow the following directions.

Set Down a Sacred Time and Place

For the spiritual discipline, first of all, all participants need to set a specific time and place to meditate on one's own life and God's will every day. All modern human beings are always busy doing something for their individual successful life. However, we cannot have a true successful life without reflecting on what we are, where we are going, and why we have to rush every day. The most basic spiritual discipline can start with a time for communion with God, the creator, every day. In order to do that, we should have a sacred time and place that should not be interrupted by others.

Daily Scriptural Meditation

We Christians believe that the Bible is the word of God. The Bible is the primary source for Christian spiritual discipline and living. The Israelites had to take Manna every day until they entered into the promise land. It is a symbol for all pilgrims. Like biblical

sayings, every human being cannot live on bread alone. As spiritual beings, all human beings need spiritual food. The word of God is spiritual food for Christians. Like drinking and eating, we should read and meditate on the Bible every day. A strong recommendation is to read the Bible and meditate on it at least 15 minutes a day. The scripture readings will be chosen by weekly themes.

Prayer and Fasting

Fasting and prayer cannot be separated from each other for spiritual discipline in Lent. We should pray and fast every day in Lent. All participants should fast at least one meal a day. Prayer is a spiritual respiration. Like we cannot live without respiration, as Christians, we cannot live without prayer. Those who do not pray are severely hampered in their spiritual life. Like daily scripture reading, prayer should be more than 15 minutes a day.

Weekly Reading

Weekly, we will read some books that are related to the weekly theme. It will not be heavy reading, but enough to provide something for our spiritual growth. As a secondary source, we will get a wider perspective for our spiritual growth from the reading materials. Once a week, while we gather together with other people in the church, we will share our new understanding and perspective.

Daily Practice

Without applying and practicing the word of God in our daily life, we never can grow spiritually. Christian spiritual discipline does not mean just to meditate on the Bible itself without praxis. Christian spiritual discipline includes our whole life such as thinking, speaking, and action. Through this practice, we will grow as a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Making a Spiritual Journal

It is a time for reflecting, recording and evaluating our spiritual discipline. It will depend upon how we faithfully meditate on the Bible and how to apply and practice the biblical insights in our daily life. It will give us insight about God and ourselves and help us to grow spiritually. It will help us to be more sensitive to God's will toward us. We should not give up if we do not make it every day. We need just to do our best. Always remember that this work is our personal pilgrimage. This is our personal spiritual property. Through this work, we can find and satisfy our spiritual growth by ourselves in the end.

Sharing with Others

One of the wonderful resources for our spiritual discipline is our spiritual colleague. Through sharing spiritual experiences, we can more widely extend our perspective. We can share our biblical meditation and our experience that we have practiced during the week. Openness, honesty, careful listening and speaking are very important things in this time. As openly as we can, we need to share our personal experience rather than theoretical and academic debates. Also, be careful not to dominate or to use up all the time of any other specific person. In this sharing, time arrangement is very important.

Format for Individual Sessions

1. 8 Min: Gathering : Greeting and Praise
2. 5 Min: Introduction / Overview of Session
 Leader will briefly introduce weekly theme.
3. 2 Min: Prayer: One of participants leads opening prayer for the session of this week.

4. 5 Min: Reading: One of the participants reads the reading materials. The other participants will meditate on it. After that, they will share their impression with each other.

5. 5 Min: Reflection about readings: Leader introduces the reading material. And then, the leader will ask for sharing for all participants' reflection about readings. Everybody listens to other's opinion.

6. 30 Min: Sharing time for weekly spiritual experience:

Everybody shares weekly biblical meditation and spiritual practice.

7. 10 Min: Break Time

In this time, leader will turn on spiritual music and serve some refreshments.

8. 15 Min: Sharing weekly readings:

In this time, leader will lead a discussion about weekly readings. All participants share their opinions about it.

9. 30 Min: Scripture Lesson: Acts 9:1-22.

This scripture lesson is related to the weekly theme. All participants will get a biblical and theological understanding about the weekly theme.

10. 5 Min: Closing Prayer and Ritual:

In this time, all participants pray a short sentence one by one. And, finish this session with leader's prayer.

11. 5 Min: Assignments:

Everybody should follow general rules every day. Weekly reading and daily scriptural meditation are related to the theme of the coming week.

Weekly Spiritual Disciplines

The First Week: To Be A Disciple

Physical Setting. For the physical setting, in this week, the chairs will be arranged in a circle. In the center, there will be a candle altar. In this week, there are six candles. After the participants sign a covenant sheet, they will arrange the sheets around the altar.

Gathering. Greeting and Praise

Introduction and Overview of Session. This session is designed to get us started for spiritual discipline. Through this session, the participants will get some reasons why they have to be spiritually disciplined. Also, they will have a time for reflecting on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ in the pluralistic society. In this session, the following things are very important: Opening heart, listening, speaking, and doing. The participants need to open their hearts fully and share their experiences.

Prayer. One of participants leads opening prayer for the session of this week.

Reading

We have assumed the name of peacemakers, but we have been, by and large, unwilling to pay any significant price. And because we want the peace with half a heart and half a life and will, the war, of course, continues, because the waging of war, by its very nature, is total- but the waging of peace, by our own cowardice, is partial. So a whole will and a whole heart and a whole national life bent toward war prevail over the velleities of peace.... "Of course, let us have the peace," we cry, "but at the same time let us have normalcy, let us lose nothing, let our lives stand intact, let us know neither prison nor ill repute nor disruption of ties...." There is no peace because there are no peacemakers. There are no makers of peace because the making of peace is at least as costly as the making of war- at least as exigent, at least as disruptive, at least as liable to bring disgrace and prison and death in its wake.¹

Daniel Berrigan, No Bars to Mannhood

¹ Water Wink, Engaging the Powers (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 174.

We Learn By Doing

Not many years ago I began to play the cello. Most people would say that what I m doing is “learning to play” the cello. But these words carry into our minds the strange idea that there exists two very different processes: (1) learning to play the cello; and (2) playing the cello. They imply that I will do the first until I have completed it, at which point I will stop the first process and begin the second. In short, I will go on “learning to play” until I have “learned to play” and then I will begin to play. Of course, this is nonsense. There are no two processes, but one. We learn to do something by doing it. There is no other way.²

John Holt

Reflection about the Readings. The participants share their impression about the reading.

Scripture Lesson: What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ in the modern pluralistic society? (Mark 1:1-45). In this lesson, we can clearly see what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. I believe that being a disciple is to follow Jesus' footprint. In the first chapter of Mark's gospel, we can see the process of becoming disciple. In other words, we can see the process of becoming Christian. The first verse is the subject of Mark's gospel. It is the good news of Jesus Christ, the son of God. The other verses explain what the good news is. From the second verse, we can see what the good news of Jesus Christ is. According to Mark's gospel, the good news includes the following things: to repent from the sin (v.4), to become children of God (v.11), to become a disciple of Jesus Christ (vv.17-8), to proclaim the word of God (vv. 14-5), to restore and to release human beings from the power of sin as children of God (vv.21-45).

² Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, comp. Chicken Soup for the Soul, vol.1 (Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 1993), 132.

and to reform the evil social structure (vv.21-3). The first chapter of Mark's gospel clearly shows all of these things.

The first step to being a disciple is repentance and regeneration (v.4-9). The second step is the assurance of the Holy Spirit (v. 10-11). The third step is spiritual discipline in the wilderness (v.12-3). The fourth step is proclamation of the word of God (14-5). The fifth step is making a disciple (v.16-20). The last step is the mission for the world (v. 21-45). The mission is closely related to restoring human beings from the power of sin and to reform the evil social structure.

Jesus called his disciples to be fishers of men for the people. What does it mean to be fishers of men for the people? We can see the truth in the mission of Jesus Christ. From verse 21 to verse 45, we can see what the mission of Jesus Christ is. Jesus' mission is to restore human beings from the evil structure and the power of sin. We should see the fact why Jesus cured the people in the synagogue and on the Sabbath day. The synagogue was the cradle of the Jewish religious ideology. The Sabbath day is closely related with the Jewish religious dogma. The reason that Jesus cured people in the synagogue and on the Sabbath day was to negate the religious parochialism and to restore the religious evil structure.

The reason that God chose the Israelites was to give God's blessing to the world (Gen. 12:2). However, they lost their mission for a long time. At the time of Jesus, many Jewish religious and political leaders were disconnected from the spiritual essence of Judaism. In Jesus' eye, the Judaism and the Temple that was the center of Judaism had to be renewed. There are three miracle stories. However those are not just miracle stories. On a sociological dimension, those miracle stories are closely related symbolically to the

reformation of the evil social structure. For Example, the story of the Cleansing of the Leper (vv.40-5) is not just the story of the curing of disease, but the story of restoring of health and wholeness. In order to understand this story, we should consider Leviticus 13 - 14. It is the law of cleansing. It is a very strong religious tradition in Judaism.

In the first-century of Jewish society, a leper was one who had, in fact, been formally declared to be such by the priest. The entire process involved was ultimately concerned with social identity and boundary maintenance. Such a declaration of deviance is often referred to in the literature as a status degradation ceremony, by which a person is formally and officially deprived of his honorable standing within the community.³

We need to carefully read verse 44. Why did Jesus say to the cured leper to show himself to the priest? In this point, we can see the real concern of Jesus Christ. His real intention is both to cure and to restore the person's social status. In this point, we can see what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to follow His footstep. What is the essence of Christian spirituality? It can be proven in the imitation of Jesus Christ.

Making Covenant. For taking this spiritual discipline course, the participants really need a strong commitment for six weeks. So, before starting, all participants should make the following covenant for participating in this Lenten spiritual discipline course. After filling out the following form, the participants should submit this covenant form to the leader. The leader needs to encourage the participants to fill it out voluntarily.

- 1) I will set aside my sacred time and place every day.
- 2) I will have a daily Bible meditation at least for 15 minutes.

³ Carl R. Kazmierski. "Evangelist and Leper: A Socio-Cultural Study of Mark 1.40-45," New Testament Studies 38, no.1 (1992): 42.

- 3) I will fast one meal a day for six weeks.
- 4) I will read some recommended books every week.
- 5) I will seek to practice the Presence of God.
- 6) I will seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit, nurturing the fruit and experiencing the joy and power of the Spirit.
- 7) I will seek to serve others everywhere I can and will work for justice in all human relationships and social structures.
- 8) I will write a spiritual journal every day.
- 9) I will share my spiritual experiences in this spiritual discipline class once a week.
- 10) I will designate prayer supporters for fulfilling these goals.

As a participant, I pledge to follow all above rules for my spiritual nurturing and discipline in this spiritual discipline course.

Name: _____ Sign: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Closing Prayer

Assignments

Weekly Reading: Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion.
(New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987).

Black Elk. Black Elk Speaks, as told through John G. Neihardt (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988).

Daily Scripture Readings:

Sunday: Human beings are created in the Image of God: Gen. 1:26-28;
Gen. 2:15-17.

Monday: The fall of human beings: Gen. 3:1-7.

Tuesday: The encounter with God of Abram: Gen. 12: 1-4.

Wednesday: The encounter with God of Moses: Exod. 3:1-4:19.

Thursday: The encounter with God of Isaiah: Isa. 6:1-13.

The encounter with God of Jeremiah: Jer. 1:1-19.

Friday: The encounter with God of Ezekiel: Ezek. 1:1- 3:27

Saturday: The encounter with God of disciples of Jesus Christ: Mark.9:2-8; Acts 22:3-21.
2 Cor. 12:1-9

Study Questions:

1. Have you ever had a mystical experience - a feeling of oneness with God, the universe, a transcendence of self, or a moment of deep insight? What happened? What was the spiritual message?
2. Could you share your experience of God?
3. Do you have a God's calling? What is it?
4. Can you find any common ground that you read in the weekly scripture readings?
5. Which Scripture is most impressive for you? What message do you hear in the Scripture?
6. In what ways is God making his presence known to you in this week?
7. What difficulty or success did you encounter while seeking holiness of heart and life in this week?

The Second Week: Encountering God

Physical setting. For this week, the tables and chairs will be arranged in a square.

In the center, as in the first week, there is a candle altar. There are five candles on the altar. The covenant sheets will again be arranged around the altar.

Gathering. Greeting and Praise

Introduction and Overview of Session. In this week, the participants will share their spiritual experience of God. The experience of God may be irrational or ineffable. Sometimes, it will be a numinous experience that transcends human common experiences. Therefore, those who have numinous experiences have a tendency to be very exclusive people because their experiences are too strong. However, even though the experiences are numinous, people need to open their heart to others and they must have room in their hearts to accept others' experiences. Through sharing our experiences of God, all participants may open their hearts to others. They will learn that others' experiences of God are as important as their own.

On the other hand, in the Bible, God's hierophany is always related to God's calling. The good examples are Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Paul. All of them have experiences of God. When they were called by God, they received a vision from God. On this point, the class participants will meditate on Christians' calling and mission in the postmodern world.

Prayer. One of the participants leads opening prayer for the session of this week.

Reading. O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where is no water. I have seen you in the Sanctuary, and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life itself, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; Your right hand upholds me. (Ps. 63:1-8)

Reflection about readings. Leader introduces the reading material. And then, leader will lead in a sharing for all participants' reflection about readings. Everybody listens to others' opinions.

Sharing time for weekly spiritual experience. According to daily Scriptural reading, all participants share their understanding about the word of God and their spiritual experiences.

10 Min: Break Time

Sharing weekly readings. In this time, leader will lead a discussion about weekly readings. All participants share their opinions about it. They share their new spiritual insights that they got from the weekly readings.

Scripture Lesson: Paul's Heirophany (Acts 9:1-22). All Paul's epistles begin with Paul's self assertion about God's calling as a disciple of Jesus Christ. In Paul's letters, we can easily see the fact that the theme of the new being in Christ is very important to Paul. His new life in Christ begins from the meeting with the risen Christ. For Paul, the meeting with the risen Christ is the experience of the numinous world, holy and hierophany. The experience was extremely significant to Paul because his life had totally changed from that experience. The dream and vision in Christ provide a new framework for Paul's life. There are three stories of the calling of Paul in Acts (Acts 9:3-7; 22:6-11; 26:12-18).

This repetition is in itself a somewhat clumsy way of stating the importance of the events reported. Two of the narratives are in the form of speeches: in Acts 22 as a speech to the Jewish people from the temple steps, in Acts 26 as a speech before Agrippa and Festus. In Acts 9 the story is a part of the general historic narrative framework.⁴

⁴ Sten Lundgren, "Ananias and the Calling of Paul in Acts." Stuida Theologia 25 (1971): 117.

The content of these narratives is different in each one. The reason is that Luke probably used a different oral tradition or Paul might have given different story versions. At any rate, the crucial thing is that the conversion experience is very important to Paul who repeatedly declared his apostleship through revelation of Jesus Christ. In Galatians 1:12, Paul says that he received the dream and vision by a relationship with Jesus Christ.

For Paul, the dream and vision by the revelation of Jesus Christ is the primary source of his defense of his apostleship to his opponents. Whenever Paul declares his apostleship, he talks about the appearance of Jesus on the road to Damascus. Paul's hierophany is not just the inner subjective event of an emotional feeling, but the objective revelation through Jesus Christ from God. Paul has a revelation of Christ.

In addition to that, according to 2 Cor. 12:1-10, Paul has another experience about the numinous world. Through this experience, Paul received great visions and revelations from the Lord.

I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know-God knows (vv.1-2). He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell (v.4). To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me (v.7).

According to verse 2, we can see that Paul's experience is an out of body experience. We don't know exactly when Paul had the experience and what the revelation and vision really was. However, according to verse 10, we can confirm that the vision provides Paul a way to live for Jesus Christ. Also, this experience gives us Paul's death experience that is found in Gal. 2:19-20. Paul confesses that "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me (Gal. 2:20)." Also, according to

Romans 6, Paul declares that his old person was crucified with Christ on the cross, and he was raised again with the risen Christ. In Christ, Paul considers that he died to sin, but he is alive to God. As a result, Paul says that "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come (2 Cor. 5:17). All his assertions are based on the experience of hierophany on the road to Damascus and the experience of a numinous world (2 Cor. 12:1-10).

Closing Prayer. In this time, all participants pray a short sentence one by one, and finish this session with the leader's prayer.

Assignments

Weekly Reading: Ignacio Castuera ed., Dreams on Fire Embers of Hope: From the Pulpits of Los Angeles After the Riots (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1992).

Anselm Min. "How Can We Follow Jesus Christ in the Multi-cultural Society?" Riot or Revolution?: A Theological Reflection on L.A. Uprising, ed. SungDo Kang, 58-83 (N.P.: Korean Caucus, California-Pacific Annual Conference, United Methodist Church, 1994).

Daily Scripture Readings:

Sunday: Broken the law: Gen. 2:21-3:24

Monday: The result of sin: Gen. 4:1-17.

Tuesday: God's plan for human salvation: John. 1:1-18.

Wednesday: Jesus Christ is our peace: Eph. 2:11-22.

Thursday: New creation in Jesus Christ: 2 Cor. 5:11-19.

Friday: Restoration of oneness in Jesus Christ: Gal. 3:23-20.

Saturday: Who is your neighbor: Luke. 10:25-37.

Study Questions:

1. Which Scripture is most impressive for you? What is the reason?

2. Who are the needy people God has placed in your path this week?
3. Whom are you being asked to serve today?
4. Could you define who your neighbors are?
5. As Korean immigrants, do you think that we Koreans have to change our attitudes to other people?
6. In your opinion, what kind of parochialism do Korean immigrants have?
7. What opportunities did you have to serve others or work for peace and justice?
8. What have you found to be the best ways for people from different classes, religions, or ethnic traditions to learn to appreciate and understand each other?
9. In what ways is God making his presence known to you in this week?
10. What difficulty or success did you encounter while seeking holiness of heart and life in this week?

The Third Week: Developing New Relationship With Our Neighbors

Physical Setting. The tables and chairs will be arranged in a square. There are four candles on the altar. The covenant sheets will again be arranged around the altar. In this week, the participants bring something that they can show that symbolizes their spiritual experience with God. They arrange the symbols around the altar.

Gathering. Greeting and Praise

Introduction and Overview of Session. We live in the most pluralistic society in the world. Nevertheless, Korean immigrants are very exclusive in this society. We need to understand who we are and where we are. We should understand we cannot live alone in this pluralistic society. We should cooperate with other ethnic groups. We need to share our life with other people. All human beings are children of God. There is no inferior nor superior ethnicity in the presence of God. Everybody is equal in the presence

of God. Through studying of this session, all participants have a chance to confirm that all human beings are brothers and sisters in the presence of God.

Prayer. One of the participants leads opening prayer for the session of this week.

Reading. All participants read the following materials silently.

Smile at each other, smile at your wife, smile at your husband,
smile at your children, smile at each other - it doesn't matter who it is-
and that will help you to grow up in greater love for each other.⁵
- Mother Teresa-

Everybody can be great . . . because anybody can serve.
You don't have to have a college degree to serve.
You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve.
You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.⁶

Reflection about Reading. Everybody share one's own reflection about the reading.

Sharing for Weekly Spiritual Experience and Bible Meditation. According to study questions, participants will share their understanding about the Bible messages and their spiritual experiences.

10 Min: Break

Sharing Weekly Reading. In this time, the leader will lead a discussion about weekly readings. All participants will share their opinions about it. They will share their new spiritual insights that they got from the weekly readings.

⁵ Canfiel and Hansen, vol.1, 37.

⁶ Ibid., 35.

Scriptural Lesson: Crossing Boundary--John. 4:1-42. This story is about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. This story tells us Jesus' mission about crossing the boundaries that are caused by ethnic, religious, social, geographical and gender otherness. This story shows us how we can fulfill the goal of our mission and ministry in the pluralistic and multi-cultural society.

Verses 1-3 reflects the parochialism and rejection of the Pharisees of Jesus. Because of the rejection of the Pharisees, Jesus left Judea and went back to Galilee. After that Jesus entered into Samaria. In the first part, this story breaks down common people's expectation and taboo. At that time Jews completely avoided social contact with Samaritans, as also with Gentiles. There are strong religious and historical conflicts between Jews and Samaritans traditionally.

The Samaritans, although they came to worship Yahweh, recognized only the Pentateuch as scripture, and their holy mountain was Gerizim, not Zion. The Jews regarded the Samaritans' Yahwism as a "thin veneer spread, for convenience, over an essential and deep seated heathenism. There was also a history of conflict between the two peoples. The Samaritans had impeded the Jews' restoration of Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile and aided Syria in wars against the Jews. The Jews in turn had burned down the Samaritan temple on Gerizim in 128 B.C. The hostility was, thus, mutual.⁷

Nevertheless, Jesus breaks down this parochial tradition. Moreover, Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "Will you give me a drink?" It was a simple request. However, it was also an extremely problematic request. In this request, we can see the fact that Jesus crossed over several boundaries such as, religious, gender otherness, ethnic and

⁷ Judith Gundry-Volf, "Spirit, Mercy, and the Other," Theology Today 51, no. 3 (Oct. 1994): 509.

geographical parochialism. As a Jew, Jesus broke down the Jewish religious traditions. Traditionally and commonly, "Jewish men were supposed to avoid contact with women, who were seen to pose a threat of seduction. Even conversation with one was dangerous: 'Meet not a strange woman, lest you fall into her nets By the comeliness of a woman many have been ruined' (Sir. 9:3-9)."⁸ The questions of the Samaritan woman and disciples well reflect on the common belief of the time. "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink? (v.9)" and "Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman (v.27)." At that time, according to common belief, as a Jew, Jesus was not to talk with the Samaritan woman.

In addition to that, in the dialogue with Jesus and the Samaritan woman, we can find what true worship is. It is to worship God in spirit and in truth (v.24). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:27)." The Holy Spirit leads us to worship God in spirit and in truth. The true worship of God is not tied to any particular cult and religious dogma. Through the true worship of God, we can overcome racism, cultural differences, gender discrimination and religious parochialism. This Scripture clearly shows us God's will towards us who live in the multi-cultural and pluralistic society.

Closing Prayer

Assignments. Bring any kind of symbol that you care the natural world.

Weekly Reading: Sallie McFague. "Eschatology: A New Shape for Humanity."
The Body of God, 197-212 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

⁸ Ibid., 509.

Earth Works Group. 50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth
(Berkeley: EarthWorks Press, 1989).

Daily Scripture Readings:

Sunday: A beautiful creation of God: Gen. 1:1-31.

Monday: God's law for the peace: Gen. 2:1-25.

Tuesday: The fall of human beings and the curse of the natural world: Gen. 3:1-24.

Wednesday: New covenant with all God's creatures: Gen. 9:1-17.

Thursday: Rest in God: Exod. 20:1-21.

Friday: The solemn rest of the land, our mother earth: Lev. 25:1-22.

Saturday: The yearning of the creations: Rom. 8:17-25

Study Questions:

1. What opportunities did you have to serve others or work for peace and justice?
2. Don't you think that we modern people are too late for recovering our eco-system?
3. Do you think that the modern consumer-oriented people can transform their life style?
4. What can you do for recovering our mother nature?
5. What opportunities did you have to work for our mother earth?
6. Have you ever been joined with any group to study the issues of the pollution of air, water, soil, and life-forms? What positive actions need to be taken?
7. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, are we becoming good stewards and cocreators with God in relation to the earth and all its resources? What could this mean in our daily lives?
8. In your opinion, what is the relationship between Christian spirituality and ecological crises?

The Fourth Week: Our Natural World

Physical Setting. The tables and chairs will be arranged in the same way as last week. There are three candles on the altar. The participants bring a symbol that they can explain the natural world that they should take care. After praise, the participants explain their symbol and arrange the things around the altar. The leader prepares a cassette tape and tape recorder.

Gathering. Greeting and Praise

Introduction and Overview of Session. In this week, the participants will deal with the topic about our natural world. In the light of the postindustrial worldview, we cannot delay to reform our modern consumer- oriented life style. We human beings should understand that we cannot live alone without relationship with the other creatures. We are deeply connected with one another, with social systems, with the earth, with God. Nevertheless, up until now, all human beings have lived as though we are not a part of the natural world. The natural world has been exploited by the greedy humans who are totally oriented by anthropocentric worldview. Now is the time to take care of the earth. If the earth is continuously polluted by the same ratio which is the current situation, all creatures may perish within a few centuries. As Christians, now we need to think that our first mission is to restore the polluted earth as God's stewards in the next century.

Prayer. One of the participants leads opening prayer for the session of this week.

Reading

One At A Time

A friend of ours was walking down a deserted Mexican beach at sunset. As he walked along, he began to see another man in the distance. As he grew nearer, he noticed that the local native kept leaning down, picking something up and throwing it out into the water. Time and again he kept hurling things out into the ocean. As our friend approached even

closer, he noticed that the man was picking up starfish that had been washed up on the beach and, one at a time, he was throwing them back into the water.

Our friend was puzzled. He approached the man and said, "Good evening, friend. I was wondering what you are doing."

"I am throwing these starfish back into the ocean. You see, it's low tide right now and all of these starfish have been washed up onto the shore. If I don't throw them back into the sea, they'll die up here from lack of oxygen."

"I understand," my friend replied, "but there must be thousands of starfish on this beach. You can't possibly get to all of them. There are simply too many. And don't you realize this is probably happening on hundreds of beaches all up and down this coast. Can't you see that you can't possibly make a difference?"

The local native smiled, bent down and picked up yet another starfish, and as he threw it back into the sea, he replied, "Made a difference to that one!"⁹

-Jack Canfield and Mark V. Hansen-

Once upon a time, a king wanted to know if his people were honest. He got an idea of how to test if his people were honest. He announced to all of the people who lived in his territory. "I will prepare a big feast. Please, join the party. But your portion to prepare is only to bring one sack of wine and share it together." And the king prepared a lot of food. The feast opened. And then, among the people, one man thought that nobody would know that he brought a sack of water instead of wine. So he brought a sack of water and poured the water into a big wine jar. However, at that day, all people drank only water, not wine.

-Author Unknown-

Reflection about readings. The leader introduces the reading material. And then, the leader will ask for sharing of all participants' reflection about readings. Everybody listens to other's opinion.

Sharing time for weekly spiritual experience

10 Min: Break Time

Sharing Weekly Readings. In this time, the leader will lead a discussion about weekly readings. All participants share their opinions about it. They share their new spiritual insights that they got from the weekly readings.

⁹ Canfield and Hansen, vol. 1, 22-23.

Scripture Lesson: Gen. 1:1-31; 9:1-17. In the age of ecological crises, how can we interpret these Scriptures? Since Gen. 1:24-31 shows God giving human beings dominion over other earthly creatures, the passage has often been used to justify human efforts to control and transform the physical world, and even to exploit it. It is an extremely anthropocentric worldview. In the age of ecological crises, we should see what is happening in the world.

Now we live in the post-industrial society. All the natural world is suffering from the exploitation by human beings. Traditionally, human beings have been understood as the crown of the creation. However, it does not mean that human beings can control all natural world only by their own interests. On the other hand, the original meaning of the crown of the creation should be concerned with the responsibility of human beings as God's stewards. The Scripture shows us divine engagement in the world and calls for a human response to care for the natural world. God is creator, coordinator of all that is. Human beings are set above the rest of creation to care for it. God conserves and protects nature and is compassionate toward all of His/Her works. Our Christian spirituality is ordered toward seeing God through His/Her creation in this postmodern world. Human beings have sinned in violating mother nature, and in so doing have harmed themselves.

Now, we need to reinterpret the Bible in terms of ecological crises. The covenant with Noah (9:8-17) provides the basis for a biblical theology of nature with its recognition of nature's beauty as an inviolability of life as expressive of God's patience with sinful humanity. The rainbow is the sign of God's covenant, not only with human beings, but also with all living creatures. We human beings should take off and throw away our anthropocentric worldview. In this time of ecological crises, our Christian

spirituality invites to respect for all creatures, as well as active and sympathetic observance of nature.

Closing Prayer. In this time, all participants pray a short sentence one by one. And, finish this session with the leader's prayer.

Assignments

Weekly Reading: William Easum, Dancing with Dinosaurs (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).

Earl D. C. Brewer and Mance C. Jackson, Jr. Wesleyan Transformations: A Study in World Methodism and World Issues (Atlanta: ITC Press, 1988).

Daily Scripture Readings

Sunday: The appearance of the Church: Acts 2:1-13.

Monday: The life in the faith community: Acts 2:36-47.

Tuesday: The mission of the Church: Matt. 28:16-20.

Wednesday: The Church that sows the hope of the world. Mark 4:30-32.

Thursday: The mission of the Church: Mark. 1:40-45; 5:1-20.

Friday: The mission of the Church: Luke. 4:16-19.

Saturday: Our Lord's revelations for the Churches in Asia Minor: Rev. 1:4-3:22.

Study Questions:

1. In your opinion, what kinds of social issues seem most important in our society?
2. How can we transform our society? As Christians, how can we participate in the social justice and peace? What is the mission of the Church for social justice?
3. How are you involved in ministries to and with the poor in your local community, in the nation, and in the world?
4. What prayers and planning, studies and action need to be undertaken by us and others?

5. What do you think about the opinions that the Church should be involved in our political and economic issues in our society, in our nation and in the world?
6. In terms of social justice and peace, could you define what Christian spirituality is?

The Fifth Week: The Mission of the Church

The Physical Setting. All settings are the same as last week. There are two candles on the altar.

Gathering. Greeting and Praise

Introduction and Overview of Session. In the light of the postmodern worldview, Korean immigrant Christians need to ask by themselves what the meaning of the existence of the church is in the new century. We believe that Christians are a salt and a light in the world. However, when we look into the Korean immigrant churches, in reality, the churches are continuously losing their leadership in the Korean immigrant society. Up until now, it is true that the church has had very important role in the Korean immigrant society. However, in the postmodern worldview, the Korean immigrant church is not preparing for the new century. Now is the time to reform our old paradigm of the church to be able to fit into the new century. In this session, all participants will meditate on what the first mission of the church is in the postmodern world.

Prayer. One of the participants leads opening prayer for the session of this week.

Reading.

We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Savior are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry

and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.¹⁰

Reflection about Readings. The leader introduces the reading material. And then, the leader will ask for sharing of all participants' reflection about readings. Everybody listens to other's opinion.

Sharing Time for Weekly Spiritual Experience

10 Min: Break Time

Sharing Weekly Readings. In this time, the leader will lead a discussion about weekly readings. All participants will share their opinions about it. They share their new spiritual insights that they got from the weekly readings.

Scripture Lesson: Mark. 11:1-13:37. In terms of a geographical concept, the mission of Jesus usually can be divided into two areas: Galilee and Jerusalem. In Mark's Gospel, the missions of Jesus were mostly conducted around Galilee. Jesus' mission in Jerusalem was for only six days in Mark's Gospel. When we compare Galilee and Jerusalem in Mark's Gospel, Galilee is the cradle of the Gospel. All disciples were called by Jesus in Galilee. However, Jerusalem is the cradle of Jesus' opponents. When we compare the verses that are related to Galilee and Jerusalem in Mark's Gospel, Galilee is always related to the cradle of the Gospel. On the other hand, Jerusalem is always related to the opponents of Jesus Christ.

¹⁰ Geoffrey Wainwright, "Ecumenical Spirituality," in The Study of Spirituality, eds. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward Yarnold, 548 "Deliberate attention to spirituality on the part of the WCC is shown in A Spirituality for Our Times: Report of a Consultation at Annecy, France, December 1984 (Geneva, 1985)."

In Mark's chapter 8:31, Jesus gave his first prediction about His crucifixion in Jerusalem. After that, Jesus began to take a journey to Jerusalem. Until He arrived at Jerusalem, Jesus gave a prediction about His crucifixion two more times (9:31, 10:33-34). At this point, we can see that Jerusalem is symbolically the center of Jesus' opponents. In Mark's Gospel, Jerusalem is "a den of robbers (11:17)." In other words, all of the religious leaders were just like robbers in the eye of Jesus. They are producers and supporters of the evil structure in Jewish society. Therefore, Jerusalem must be thrown down (13:2).

In today's text, we can see the mission of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem for three days. In this chapter, we can see how Jesus acted for social justice. At that time, the religious leaders were political leaders also. However, they were completely depraved. On the other hand, the common people were suffering under the evil structure. Jesus worked for reforming the evil structure. In Mark's Gospel, Jerusalem is identified with the temple that is changed into a den of robbers. Jesus himself fought against the religious leaders who lived around the temple. He revealed their real characters as robbers. Jesus shook the foundation of the religious, social, political, and economic leaders in Jerusalem. As a result, Jesus was crucified on the cross by the ones who supported and produced the evil structure. In order to understand the facts that Jerusalem's temple is symbolically a representative of an evil structure, we need to carefully see the plot of Mark.

We observe that the story traditionally called the cleansing of the temple (11:15-19) is enclosed by the two parts of a story dealing with a fig tree. In 11:12-14 Mark reports Jesus' cursing of the fig tree; it followed in 11:15-19 by the so-called cleansing story; in 11:20-22 the reader learns of the

final outcome of the fig tree. It is a special Mark's compositional technique.¹¹

Jesus proclaimed why the temple of Jerusalem should be destroyed. In addition to that, in chapter 12, we can see several controversial topics. Jesus argued with the high priests, scribes, elders, Pharisees, and Sadducees. They were producers and supporters of the ideology of the temple. They challenged the authority of Jesus Christ. However, all of them were rebuked by Jesus. Jesus completely negated their ideology. At this point, we can see Jesus' spiritual journey. One of His main goals is to reform a non-just social structure. This is the way of the Church that Jesus Christ shows us today.

Closing Prayer. At this time, all participants pray a short sentence one by one, and finish this session with the leader's prayer.

Assignments. Draw a picture that you can explain what your understanding of Christian spirituality is.

Weekly Reading: Gustavo Gutierrez, "A People in Search of God," We Drink from Our Own Wells, 72-89 (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995).

Daily Scripture Readings:

Sunday: The ways of life that Jesus Christ wants for us: Matt. 5:1-20.

Monday: New way of life for disciple: Matt. 5:21-48.

Tuesday: The life of Disciple: Matt. 6:1-18.

Wednesday: The first priority of the disciples: Matt. 6:19-34.

¹¹ Werner H. Kelber, Mark's Story of Jesus (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979). 59.

Thursday: The way of life: Matt. 7:1-14.

Friday: The fruits of our life prove who we are: Matt. 7:15-27.

Saturday: People who know God love people: 1 John. 3:1-4:21.

Study Questions:

1. Meditate on who are real disciples of Jesus Christ.
2. Did you find a new way for your life in this week?
3. Could you share your fasting experience with other people?
4. At this point, could you define what Christian spirituality is?
5. Through this course, how did you change your understanding about Christian spirituality?

The Sixth Week: What is Christian Spirituality?

Physical Setting. The tables and chairs are the same as last week. There are only one candle on the altar. After praise, the participants will explain their pictures that show their understanding of Christian spirituality. After that, they arrange the pictures around the altar.

Gathering. Greeting and Praise

Introduction and Overview of Session. In this session, all participants will wrap up this course. Through sharing with one another, they will confirm what Christian spirituality really is. In order to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ and to fulfill the Christian mission in the coming new century, the participants will discuss what kind of spirituality we have to have.

Prayer. One of the participants leads opening prayer for the session of this week.

Reading

Picking Up A Spoon

The simple things around you at home, all are laden with wisdom at many different levels. You have a spoon, a wooden kitchen spoon. Every time you pick it up, you could remember where you got it and when, and to fully explain that you would have to give the entire history of your life, and that of all your shop, at that particular time, in that particular place. So every commonplace "thing" connects you to the universe. Every thing is a "souvenir" a reminder of import.¹²

-Alice O. Howell-

Reading the Newspaper

I've never been very good at feasting on the daily newspaper. It turns bitter in my mouth. And yet, this is my world. This face of suffering I must embrace as a part of my responsibility. Part of the feast is owning this broken world as my own brokenness. I clasp the newspaper to my heart and ask once again in the stillness of the night, "What are we doing to the image of God in one another?"¹³

-Macrina Wiederkehr-

Reflection about Readings. The leader introduces the reading material. And then, the leader will ask for sharing of all participants' reflection about readings. Everybody listens to others' opinions.

Sharing Time for Weekly Spiritual Experience

10 Min: Break Time

Sharing weekly readings. At this time, the leader will lead discussion about weekly readings. All participants share their opinions about it. They share their new spiritual insights that they got from the weekly readings.

¹² Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, Spiritual Literacy (New York: Scribner, 1996). 523.

¹³ Ibid., 524.

Scriptural Lesson: The Sermon on the Mount: Matt. 5:1-7:29. Today's scriptures are the Sermon on the Mount. As Christians, we believe that it is the essence of the teachings of Jesus. Nevertheless, almost everybody feels that it is impossible to follow the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount exactly in our daily life. If we agree with that, we should ask how the teachings have impact upon the practical expression of Christian faith in our daily living. Traditionally, the Sermon on the Mount has been focused on the essence of the teachings of Jesus in scholastic circle. "Some scholars have concluded that the Sermon on the Mount is a hodge-podge of teachings from Jesus and strung together by Matthew with no essential unifying theme."¹⁴

However, after setting forth the various arguments, some scholars, such as Huber L. Drumwright, Jr., Robert Morgan, Allen Verhey and L. H. Marshall,¹⁵ concluded that the Sermon on the Mount was the ethical teachings of Jesus Christ for his disciples who entered into the kingdom of God. The audiences of the Sermon on the Mount were disciples of Jesus Christ, not ordinary people. "T.W. Manson observes: The Sermon is not saying: 'This is how men in general should live if they really want to build the Kingdom of God on earth.' It is saying, 'This is how you who are in the kingdom of God must live if your citizenship is to be a reality.'"¹⁶ If we agree with his opinion, we carefully think about how we practice in our daily life. Although Francis of Assisi.

¹⁴ Guy Greenfield, "The Ethics of the Sermon on the Mount," SouthWestern Journal of Theology 35, no.1 (Fall 1992): 13.

¹⁵ Ibid., 13-14.

¹⁶ Ibid., 14.

Gandhi and Leo Tolstoi¹⁷ strictly followed the teachings of Jesus, we cannot but help ask ourselves if it is really possible in our postmodern society. As Christians, how can we stand by while evil people do what they want? If evil people control the social systems and many innocent people are suffering under the evil structures, even in that case, shouldn't we protest them? If evil people intentionally try to destroy the Church, how can we stand before them? What is the real disciple's ethic? As Christians, we need to more deeply meditate on the Sermon on the Mount.

Closing Prayer

At this time, all participants pray a short sentence one by one, and finish this session with the leader's prayer.

Assignments

Weekly Reading: Leonardo Boff, Sacraments of Life: Life of the Sacraments, ed. Ignacio Castuera, trans. John Drury (Washington D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1975).

Daily Scripture Readings:

Sunday: To be a disciple: Mark. 1:45.

Monday: Paul's spiritual experience of encountering Jesus Christ: Acts 9:1-22.

Tuesday: Crossing boundary: John. 4:1-42.

Wednesday: God's beautiful creations: Gen. 1:1-31; 9:1-17.

Thursday: The Mission of Jesus Christ: Mark. 11:1 - 13:37.

Friday: The way of life of disciple: Matt. 5:1-7:29.

¹⁷ W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., "Reflections on the Sermon on the Mount," Scottish Journal of Theology 44 (1991): 286.

Saturday: People who know God love people: 1 John. 3:1-4:21.

Study Questions:

1. Do you think that our modern people can live like the teachings of the sermon on the mount?
2. Can you try to apply the teachings of the sermon on the mount in your daily life? And then, could you share your experiences in this class?
3. Do you think that it is impossible for us to be able to live in perfect justice?
4. In your opinion, how can good people stand by while evil people do what they will?
5. How much are you sensitive to your daily life spiritually?
6. Could you make your own spiritual discipline plan for the future?

One Day Retreat: Prayer and Testimony

On the last day, the participants will go to a one day retreat. At that time, the participants will pray together and they will have a testimony and intercessory prayer time. In the testimonial time, they will share their spiritual experiences that they practiced in this spiritual discipline course. Also, they will have communion service. The leader will lead a wrap-up of all the happenings in this course. The leader needs to encourage the participants to develop their own spirituality continuously.

Evaluation

Even though the practice of this course was very difficult, it was a wonderful spiritual experience for all of the participants. This spiritual discipline course was performed from the last Friday of February to the first Friday of April, 1998. In the beginning, 16 young adults applied for the course. However, three persons dropped out during the course. The participants were composed of four couples, one single man and four single women.

The main obstacle is that this project is written in English. From the first, recruiting the participants was very difficult because most of the Koreans did not want to be involved in the English course. It was very hard to organize the study group. Another problem is the reading material. It was actually too much for the participants. In the first session, I strongly recommended reading all of the reading materials. However, I realized that they were not full time students. As a result, one person read one each week and introduced the reading material to the other participants. The other difficult thing was fasting. Nobody completely followed the fasting of one meal a day for forty days. However, most of the participants took fasting over ten meals during Lent. It was a wonderful experience for all of the participants.

In addition to that, unfortunately, we could not go on the retreat. It was originally designed to go to a retreat center. However, most of the participants could not participate in the retreat because they had to work. Therefore, instead of that, we had a sharing time and communion service in our church.

However, thirteen brave people finished this course very successfully. All of them actively and strongly participated in the course. All of the participants confessed that they had wonderful spiritual experiences through this course. After taking this course, all participants confessed that they could get ideas how to practice spiritual exercises in their daily life. Also they could get a chance to meditate on what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ in the modern pluralistic and multi-cultural society.

The sharing time was the most wonderful time of this course. Through sharing their life, the participants could encourage, understand and challenge each other. Through sharing, they confirm how all human beings are different from each other, nevertheless.

how they can love each other in the grace of God. Most of the participants confessed that their daily life was changed from the past.

They became more sensitive to the need of other people, social justice issues and ecological issues. Now they try to save energy when they possibly can. They try to use a mug instead of a paper or polystyrene cup. Women say that they try to save water during dish washing. In addition to that, all participants made an agreement that they do not throw aluminum can or news papers in the trashcan. It is a wonderful result of this spiritual discipline course.

The most wonderful result of this course is that most of the participants are continuously involved in the Bible study. We can develop our Christian spirituality more deeply in the future. During the Lent, we could have a chance to deeply meditate on the passion of Jesus Christ. The main goal of this project was to follow the suffering Jesus in our daily life. Through this spiritual discipline course in Lent, we could confirm what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ in the postmodern world.

CAPTER 6

Conclusion

This project was originally intended to develop Korean Christian spirituality through Lent in the light of the postmodern worldview. Therefore, I chose the six dimensions that I thought were the most urgent and important spiritual dimensions for Korean immigrants. We Korean immigrants should know our social context that is the most pluralistic and multi-cultural society in the world. However, most of the Korean immigrants have an ethnocentric and individual-centered understanding about the Christian spirituality. Therefore, through this spiritual discipline course, I try to open the Korean Christian eyes for wider perspectives in the pluralistic and postmodern world. In this postmodern world, we cannot live alone. There is no human salvation in the self-centered, ethnocentric and anthropocentric faith. We should open our eyes toward the world.

Our global village that God created is suffering from various problems such as the conflict between nations, races, religions, world hunger, the drain of natural resources and energy, overpopulation and the crises of ecology, nuclearism, etc. We cannot ignore these kinds of problems any more. Although a conflict may be localized between one nation and another, this can never be limited within a specific boundary. All happenings are related with all of the people of the global village. As human beings, we live in the global village as a family. We need mutual understanding between one race and another, one religion and another, one culture and another.

The world is moving into the twenty-first century. In terms of human civilization, this coming century will be a new century that human beings have never ever met before.

We should ask ourselves, what does it mean to be a Christian in the postmodern world?
We should answer the question in the light of pluralistic world and ecological crises age.
We should reform our Christian spirituality that only focuses on the salvation of sinners.
We should embrace and listen to the cry and suffering of the victims and the poor.

The true Christian spirituality can be found in the way of life that Jesus walks toward Jerusalem to be crucified on the cross for the salvation of all God's creatures in Lent. We need to reform our individual- centered life and spirituality. All human beings are created in the Image of God. All human beings are brothers and sisters. We are equal in the presence of God. A true Christian spirituality can be proved in the process of restoring our broken relationships between, God, our neighbors and the natural world. Lent is the time to pray. Lent is the time to reform our spirituality and our individual-centered life.

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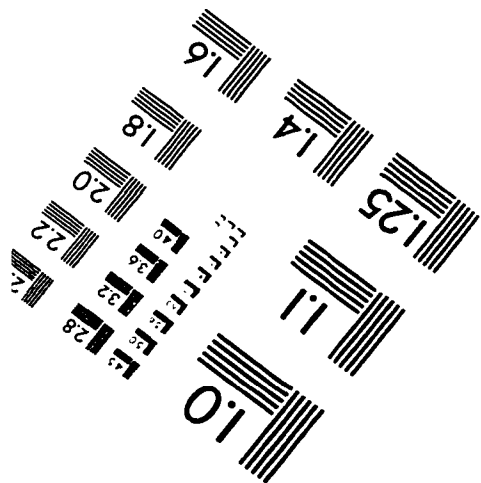
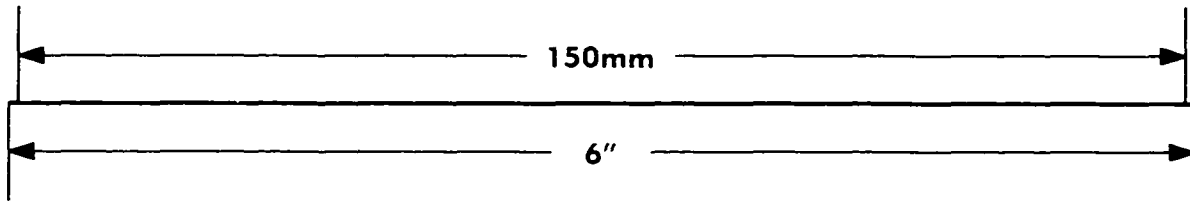
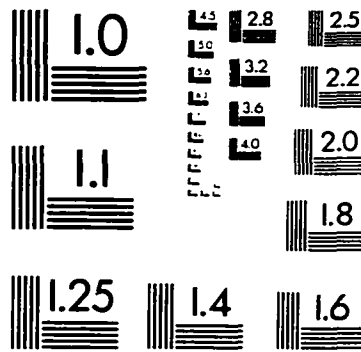
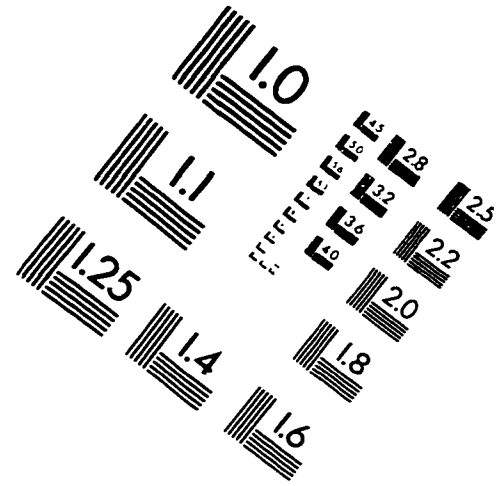
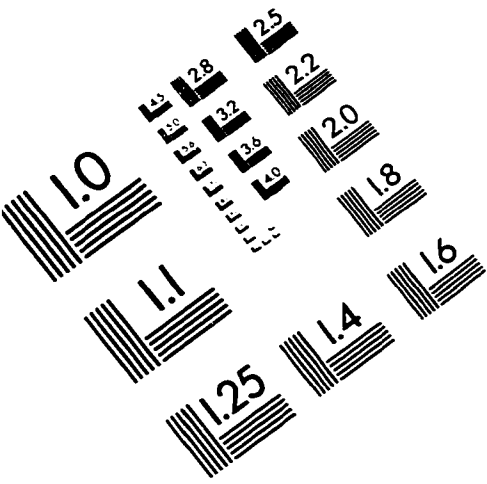
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